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Cecilia Muratori

The First German Philosopher

The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme as
Interpreted by Hegel



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THE FIRST GERMAN PHILOSOPHER

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The First German Philosopher

The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme
as Interpreted by Hegel

Translated from Italian by
Richard Dixon and Raphaëlle Burns

 Springer

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Contents

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Note on Translations | ix |
| Acknowledgements | xi |
| List of Abbreviations..... | xiii |
| Introduction..... | xvii |
| 1 The Reception of Böhme's Philosophy Around 1800..... | 1 |
| 1 Preamble: Böhme's Comeback in Germany and the Romantic Reception..... | 1 |
| 1.1 The "Mystical Cobbler" and Franckenberg's Biography of Böhme | 1 |
| 1.2 Böhme and the Jena Circle | 7 |
| 1.2.1 Tieck's "Hypochondriac Enthusiasm" for Böhme's Writings | 9 |
| 1.2.2 Böhme's <i>Poesie</i> According to Friedrich Schlegel | 20 |
| 2 The Reception of Böhme's Philosophy Through the Theories of Animal Magnetism and Theosophy | 29 |
| 2.1 <i>Naturphilosophie</i> and Animal Magnetism: Nature's Dynamics and the Mystical Experience of Magnetic Sleep | 29 |
| 2.2 Böhme's Mysticism Between Paracelsus and Theosophy..... | 42 |
| 3 The Historical Context of Hegel's Encounter with <i>Theosophia Revelata</i> | 56 |
| 3.1 Magnetic 'Torpor' and Böhme's Speculation: The Reasons for a Missing Link..... | 58 |
| 3.1.1 The Correspondence Between Hegel and van Ghert..... | 58 |
| 3.1.2 Animal Magnetism and <i>Hellsehen</i> in the <i>Encyclopedia</i> ... | 66 |
| 3.2 The Influence of Pietism and Mysticism on the Young Hegel..... | 73 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 2 Two Different Conceptions of Mysticism in Hegel's Writings | 87 |
| 1 The Meaning of Mysticism and Its Role in the Early Writings | 87 |
| 1.1 Mysticism in <i>Fragments on Popular Religion and Christianity</i> | 88 |
| 1.2 Mystical Action and Mystical Object | 97 |
| 1.2.1 Mystical Action and the Difference Between the Mystical and the Symbolic | 97 |
| 1.2.2 The Mystical Object and Its Contradictions | 104 |
| 1.2.3 Luther and the "Mystical Point" of the Ritual | 112 |
| 1.3 Speaking Mystically: Mysticism, Movement and Schwärmerei in <i>The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate</i> | 123 |
| 2 Mysticism and Mystification: The Hegelian Attack on the Mystical Alienation of the Romantics and of the Followers of Schelling | 133 |
| 2.1 The Leap Beyond the Limit and the Pistol Shot in the <i>Preface to the Phenomenology</i> | 133 |
| 2.2 Hegel's Review of Solger's Writings and the "Mystical Tendency" of Romanticism | 145 |
| 2.3 From Mystification to Mysticism | 151 |
| 3 Mysticism and Speculation | 159 |
| 3.1 The Mystery and the Secret | 161 |
| 3.2 Mystical Enthusiasm and the Movement of Thought | 172 |
| 3.2.1 The Neoplatonists and the Mystical Scholastics | 172 |
| 3.2.2 The Dispute over the Notion of Mystical Enthusiasm (<i>Schwärmerei</i>) | 179 |
| 3.2.3 The Case of Jakob Böhme | 184 |
| 4 Appendix. The Loss of Mystical Mobility: Schelling | 192 |
| 3 Hegel as Interpreter of Böhme | 201 |
| 1 The Beginnings: References to Böhme in the Jena Texts | 201 |
| 1.1 Mysticism as a Middle Way: Böhme and Oriental Mysticism | 202 |
| 1.2 The "Life Cycle of God": Böhme's Use of Imagery in Fragment 49 | 209 |
| 1.3 The Dialectic Vitality of the Divine Triangle | 214 |
| 2 Böhme in Hegel's Published Works | 219 |
| 2.1 References in the <i>Encyclopedia</i> and in <i>Logic</i> , Or: What Is Alive and What Is Dead in Böhme's Philosophy | 221 |
| 2.1.1 Böhme and Paracelsus | 222 |
| 2.1.2 Lucifer and the Negativity of Nature: The <i>Zusatz</i> to Paragraph 248 of the <i>Encyclopedia</i> | 228 |
| 2.1.3 The "Famous Question Regarding the Origin of Evil in the World" | 231 |
| 2.1.4 The Movement of Böhme's Quality | 237 |

| | | |
|-------|---|------------|
| 3 | Böhme in the Lectures..... | 244 |
| 3.1 | The Concept and Its Representation | 245 |
| 3.1.1 | The Barbarity of the Enthusiast..... | 246 |
| 3.1.2 | Böhme's Struggle at the Origins of German Philosophy | 254 |
| 3.1.3 | Rediscovering the Vitality of the Concept: Translating Böhme's Terminology | 259 |
| 3.2 | Trinity, Movement and Speculation..... | 266 |
| 3.2.1 | The Serpent's Truth: Division, Knowledge and Self-Consciousness | 267 |
| 3.2.2 | Dialectics of Lucifer's Separation | 274 |
| 3.2.3 | The Speculative Mystery of Evil..... | 281 |
| | Conclusion, or How to Liberate Böhme's Philosophy | 289 |
| | Appendix: H.G. Hotho, <i>Nachschrift aus Hegels Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie</i> (Winter Term 1823–1824), fol. 129v–fol. 136r | 293 |
| | Bibliography | 303 |
| | Name Index..... | 317 |
| | Subject Index..... | 323 |

Note on Translations

All translations from German into English are by Cecilia Muratori, unless otherwise stated. Since terminological consistency is crucial to the development of the argument, most passages quoted from non-English primary sources were translated especially for this volume. Nevertheless, references to important modern translations of Hegel's works are given in the footnotes, and significant divergences are noted. Partly for reasons of copyright permissions, quotations from Hegel and other primary sources are taken wherever possible from editions now in the public domain. In these cases, references to current standard editions have also been included in the footnotes. This system has been adopted for quotations in which any differences between the older and the newer editions are minor and do not affect the formulation and the meaning of the passages in question. (Significant differences are always pointed out.) This system of referencing also has the advantage that the reader can easily consult online texts in the public domain or choose to use the newer editions. Raphaëlle Burns translated the Introduction, Chapter 2, and the Conclusion; Richard Dixon translated Chapters 1 and 3 and revised the entire manuscript.

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This book has its deeper roots in my PhD thesis (University of Jena and University of Urbino). Since I completed it, in 2009, the main focus of my research has shifted to different topics, but what I learned in Jena about working in the history of philosophy, while studying Hegel with my German *Doktorvater*, Klaus Vieweg, has accompanied me ever since. Thank you!

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I am very grateful to the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Handschriftenabteilung) for granting me permission to reprint the transcription of the section on Böhme from the following manuscript material: H.G. Hotho, *Nachschrift aus Hegels Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (1823–1824) (classmark: Ms. Ger. Qu. 1300). Once again, I wish to thank Bernhard Pfeiffer for his help in the transcription: any mistakes remain entirely my own.

My husband, James, has accompanied the entire development of this book, following its transformation from my mother tongue into his. With patience and encouragement he helped me to solve terminological problems as well as to untangle conceptual difficulties. This book is dedicated to him, remembering the years we spent together in Germany.

List of Abbreviations

Please note that this list includes bibliographical details of frequently quoted primary sources. Published books listed here are not repeated in the main bibliography, which contains details of all further editions cited.

Böhme

- | | |
|-----|--|
| BS | Böhme, Jakob. 1955-1961. <i>Sämtliche Schriften</i> . Facsimile of the 1730 edition, begun by A. Faust, new edition by W.-E. Peuckert, 11 vols. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog |
| AuN | Böhme, Jakob. 2008. <i>Aurora nascente</i> , ed. Cecilia Muratori. Milan: Mimesis |

Hegel

- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>Briefe</i> | Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1969-1981. <i>Briefe von und an Hegel</i> , ed. Johannes Hoffmeister and Friedhelm Nicolin, 4 vols. Hamburg: Meiner (third edition) |
| <i>Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung</i> | Hegel, G.W.F. 1936. <i>Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung</i> , ed. Johannes Hoffmeister. Stuttgart: Frommann. |
| <i>Encyclopedia Logic</i> | Hegel, G.W.F. 1991. <i>The Encyclopedia Logic: Part 1 of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences</i> , trans. Theodore F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris. Indianapolis: Hackett. |

- ETW Hegel, G.W.F. 1961. *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox, with an introduction and fragments translated by R. Kroner. Harper: New York (first edition: 1948. Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
- GW Hegel, G.W.F. 1968-. *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by the Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Hamburg: Meiner; in particular:
- GW 1 *Frühe Schriften I*, ed. Friedhelm Nicolín and Gisela Schüler (1989)
- GW 3 *Frühe Exerpte*, ed. Friedhelm Nicolín in collaboration with Gisela Schüler (1991)
- GW 5 *Schriften und Entwürfe (1799-1808)*, ed. Manfred Baum and Kurt Rainer Meist, in collaboration with Theodor Ebert (1998)
- GW 6 *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, ed. Klaus Düsing and Heinz Kimmmerle (1975)
- GW 9 *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Reinhard Heede (1980)
- GW 11 *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band: Die objektive Logik (1812-13)*, ed. Friedrich Hogemann and Walter Jaeschke (1978)
- GW 13 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1817)*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Klaus Grotzsch, in collaboration with Udo Rameil and Hans-Christian Lucas (2000)
- GW 17 *Vorlesungsmanuskripte I (1816-1831)*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (1987)
- GW 19 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1827)*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Hans-Christian Lucas (1989)
- GW 20 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Hans-Christian Lucas, in collaboration with Udo Rameil (1992)
- GW 21 *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil: Die objektive Logik. Erster Band: Die Lehre vom Sein (1832)*, ed. Friedrich Hogemann and Walter Jaeschke (1985)
- HL Rosenkranz, Karl. 1977. *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben*, with an afterword by Otto Pöggeler. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (facsimile of the Berlin 1844 edition)
- History of Phil.* Hegel, G.W.F. 2009. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825-6*, ed. Robert F. Brown, trans. R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris. Oxford: Clarendon Press, vol. 3

- N Hegel, G.W.F. 1907. *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Herman Nohl. Tübingen: Mohr
- Notes et fragments* Hegel, G.W.F. 1991. *Notes et Fragments (Iéna 1803-1806)*, ed. Catherine Colliot-Thélène (et al.). Paris: Aubier
- Philosophy of Religion* Hegel, G.W.F. 1984-1987. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris. Berkeley: University of California Press
- TWA Hegel, G.W.F. 1969-1971. *Werke in 20 Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (Theorie-Werkausgabe); in particular:
- TWA 1 *Frühe Schriften*
- TWA 2 *Jenaer Schriften*
- TWA 3 *Phänomenologie des Geistes*
- TWA 5-6 *Wissenschaft der Logik*
- TWA 7 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*
- TWA 8-10 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*
- TWA 11 *Berliner Schriften*
- TWA 13-15 *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*
- TWA 16-17 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*
- TWA 18-20 *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*
- V Hegel, G.W.F. 1983-. *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*. Hamburg: Meiner; in particular:
- V 2 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst, Berlin 1823, Nachgeschrieben von H.G. Hotho*, ed. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert (1998)
- V 3-5 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (1983-1985)
- V 6-9 *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Walter Jaeschke and Pierre Garniron (1989-1996)
- Werke* Hegel, G.W.F. 1832-1845; 1887. *Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe*, ed. by the Verein von Freunden des Verewigten, 17 vols. Berlin and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot; in particular:
- Werke 2* *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johann Schulze (1832)
- Werke 3* *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Leopold von Henning (1833)
- Werke 6-7* *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, ed. Leopold von Henning (Part I: 1840), Carl Ludwig Michelet (Part II: 1842) and Ludwig Boumann (Part III: 1845)
- Werke 11-12* *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion I and II*, ed. Philipp Marheineke (1832)

| | |
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| <i>Werke</i> 13-15 | <i>Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie</i> , ed. Carl Ludwig Michelet (1833-1836) |
| <i>Werke</i> 16-17 | <i>Vermischte Schriften I and II</i> , ed. Friedrich Förster and Ludwig Boumann (1834-1835) |
| <i>Werke</i> 19 | <i>Briefe von und an Hegel</i> , ed. Karl Hegel (1887) |

Other Sources

| | |
|------|---|
| ALZ | Christian Gottfried Schütz, et al. (ed.). 1785-1849. <i>Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung</i> . Halle: Schwetschke |
| DW | Grimm, Jakob and Grimm, Wilhelm (ed.). 1854-1961. <i>Deutsches Wörterbuch</i> . 16 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel |
| FC | von Baader, Franz Xaver. 1851-1869. <i>Fermenta cognitionis</i> . In <i>Sämmtliche Werke</i> , 16 vols., ed. by the Verein von Freunden des Verewigten. Leipzig: Bethmann. Vol. 2, 137-442 (first edition: ed. Franz Hoffmann. Volume 1 to 5: Berlin: Reimer (1822-1824); volume 6: Leipzig: Hinrichs (1825)) |
| KFSA | Schlegel, Friedrich. 1958-. <i>Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe</i> , ed. Ernst Behler, in collaboration with J.-J. Anstett and H. Eichner, 35 vols. Paderborn: Schöningh |

Introduction

“It almost seems to me”, writes Baader in the first notebook of the *Fermenta cognitionis*, “that I am today the first and still, unfortunately, the only one to have recognized and understood the reform of knowledge initiated and pursued by J. Böhme”, adding that “for me the philosophy of this *philosophus teutonicus*, that, as Hegel writes, reaches the vastest depths, has become the guide toward the luminous heights”.¹ In 1822, the year in which this notebook was published, Baader considered himself the only German to attribute a key role to Jakob Böhme in the history of philosophical thought or, rather, the only one apart from Hegel, since Baader appeals directly to the judgment of the latter, for whom Böhme’s philosophy “reaches the vastest depths”. That Baader should choose to refer to Hegel, among the many other nineteenth-century readers of Böhme, may at first sight seem surprising. Since studies on the relationship between Hegel and the mysticism of Böhme are few and far between,² we might in fact wonder whether the theme is relevant to Hegel’s thought at all. We might also, therefore, wonder what drove Baader to justify his own appraisal of Böhman philosophy by reference to Hegel. Terry Pinkard, for example, omits all mention of Hegel’s readings of Böhme in his biography of the former,³ and the recently published *Hegel-Handbuch* edited by Walter Jaeschke

¹FC, vol. 1, 196: “Es scheint mir fast, als ob ich in unseren Zeiten der Erste und leider noch der Einzige sei, welcher durch J. Böhme begonnene und durchgeführte wissenschaftliche Reformation als solche anerkannt und begriffen hat. [...] Mir ist nemlich dieses Philosophi teutonici Philosophie, die gar sehr, wie Hegel sagt, in die Tiefe geht, in die lichte Höhe führend geworden”.

²Only one study ventures beyond the limited scope of the essay form to attempt a more comprehensive analysis: Walsh (1978) (doctoral dissertation). As the title indicates, Walsh proposes to investigate the ‘esoteric origins’ of Hegel’s thought. The study, however, is incomplete: Hegel’s readings of Böhme are subsumed within the wider framework of Hegel’s general interest in esotericism (Magee (2011) puts forward a similar argument). Walsh, moreover, extends the boundaries of esotericism to include cabbalistic teachings, classical German mysticism, alchemy and pietism. The first chapter of the present work stresses the importance of drawing a distinction between Böhme and this variegated form of esotericism – a distinction already made, it is argued, by Hegel.

³Pinkard (2000).

dedicates only a few lines to the matter.⁴ Why then defend the value of Böhme's mysticism by citing the judgment of Hegel? To put the question another way: Why think of Hegel as an interpreter of Böhme?

The purpose of this inquiry is to demonstrate that Hegel's interpretation of the mysticism of Böhme deserves to be investigated properly. Not only was Baader's choice of reference far from casual, it was in fact perfectly justified.⁵ Indeed, Hegel played a crucial role in the rediscovery of Böhme in the early nineteenth century, and his reception and interpretation of Böhme's thought was highly original.

Pivotal to Hegel's interpretation is – as Baader reminds us – the acknowledgement of the *philosophical* significance of Böhme's mysticism. Hegel's attempt to read *Theosophia revelata* (the title under which Böhme's complete works were published posthumously) philosophically is a recurrent theme in many of his works. From the first Jena fragments to the generous section dedicated to Böhme in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel demonstrates a detailed and in-depth knowledge of numerous works by Böhme. The silence of critics on this point is not due, therefore, to an absence of relevant material. It is, rather, the result of two basic misconceptions: first with respect to the characteristics of Böhme's mysticism and second with respect to Hegel's interest in mysticism in general. Together, these assumptions have given rise to a third misconception, namely, that the philosophy of Hegel and the mysticism of Böhme are essentially incompatible, indeed radically opposed: in which case nothing would be more improbable than Hegel taking an interest in the German mystic of the sixteenth century.⁶

By conducting a detailed inquiry into Hegel's role as interpreter of Böhme, this study aspires to go beyond such limited perspectives. It is divided into three distinct chapters; while each may be read and considered independently from the others, they are, at the same time, fundamentally interconnected:

1. The first chapter of this work reconstructs the full historical context of Hegel's encounter with Böhme's writings, essential to understanding the originality of Hegel's approach. The 'standard representation' of Böhme as a mystical cobbler who, illuminated by God, was elevated from his condition of ignorance is the result of a particular interpretive tradition which is often transmitted with little to no reference to any primary sources. The first complete edition of Böhme's writings was published in Amsterdam in 1682. Only in 1715 were his works collected in two volumes published in Hamburg under the title *Theosophia revelata*, the first edition printed in Germany. Fifteen years later, a third complete edition was published, this time in Leiden, Holland.⁷

⁴Jaeschke (2003), 404.

⁵It is important to note that Hegel and Baader offer significantly different interpretations of Böhman mysticism. See below, Chap. 1, Sect. 2.1 and Chap. 2, Sect. 2.3.

⁶Efforts have been made in recent years to place Hegel's interest in Böhme in a wider esoteric context; see, for example, Walsh (1978) and Magee (2001). The premises of these interpretations are, however, equally problematic.

⁷A few writings were published separately prior to this edition. On the history of the original manuscripts, from mysterious disappearances to unlikely recoveries, see W. Buddecke's recon-

For eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers, including Hegel, any encounter with Böhme's writings was inevitably inflected if not entirely determined by a series of pre-existing codifications concerning the figure of the cobbler. The implicit, yet widespread, consensus regarding the affinity between Böhme's mysticism and pietism, on the one hand, and experiments with animal magnetism, on the other, must be considered against this backdrop. Indeed, an examination of the main interpretations of Böhme's mysticism among Hegel's contemporaries makes it possible to complete the picture, revealing the distinctiveness of Hegel's approach and at the same time providing a preliminary sketch of the reasons for his interest in Böhme. The originality of Hegel's interpretation, which will come to light below, can only be appreciated by contrasting it with other readings of Böhme, namely, those of members of the so-called 'Jena circle'.

2. The second chapter of this study situates the interpretation of Böhme's mysticism within a broader horizon of inquiry, namely, Hegel's reflection on the nature of mysticism itself. This topic is rarely treated in the vast secondary literature on Hegel's philosophy. A few well-known studies focus on the young Hegel, implying that by the time he reached maturity, Hegel had distanced himself from an enthusiasm for the mystics.⁸ According to this view, mysticism is radically opposed to the rigor of the concept, being an irrational attitude unsuited to the author of the *Phenomenology* – a text often considered as a crucial turning point in the development of Hegel's philosophy. An analysis of the presence of this theme in Hegel's writings, from the early writings (*Jugendschriften*) to the texts following the *Phenomenology*, reveals, however, that such superficial dichotomies belong solely to Hegel's critics and not to Hegel himself. In a study of Hegel as reader of Böhme published in 1897 (still one of the most perceptive discussions on the matter), E. S. Haldane gestures toward the need to distinguish different forms of mysticism in order to understand Hegel's approach to Böhme.⁹ This important intuition will be developed in the central part of this work: in Hegel's writings, it is argued that two substantially different conceptions of mysticism are discernible. Hegel opposes a *speculative* type of mysticism, characterized by the idea of dialectical movement and exemplified in the approaches of both the Neoplatonists and Böhme, to the *pseudo-mystical* attitude of the Romantics and of certain followers of Schelling. This distinction will allow us to delineate the characteristics of Böhme's mysticism according to Hegel with greater precision while clarifying the misunderstanding according to which Hegel would have rejected *all forms of mysticism* as leaps into the Absolute that

struction in Böhme (1963–1966), vol. 1, 349–352 and vol. 2, 477–484. See also Böhme (1997), 832.

⁸The fundamental texts in which this interpretation is defended are Dilthey (1921); Haering (1929–1938), vol. 1; and Della Volpe (1929). See also Adams (1910), 67–102.

⁹Haldane (1897), 146–161, especially 149.

intentionally forgo the labour of conceptuality.¹⁰ A close examination of the sections of Hegel's early writings that develop and problematize the concept of mysticism will serve as a starting point to consider the evolution of two distinct understandings of the term. It will also clarify the frame of reference in which to understand Hegel's encounter with Böhme's mysticism.

3. The third chapter of the book, in which the first two chapters converge and culminate, analyses Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's mystical philosophy in greater detail. The study sets out from two principal theses: that Hegel's interpretation evolves substantially and that this evolution is particularly evident in Hegel's choice of themes and concepts drawn from the writings of Böhme.¹¹ The inquiry proceeds in an approximately chronological order, from the *Jena Wastebook*, to Hegel's references to Böhme in published works, and finally to his most comprehensive analysis in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Hegel's interest in Böhme first surfaces during his period in Jena and develops over the subsequent years. It is clear, from the comparison of various manuscripts relating to Hegel's lecture course on the *History of Philosophy* (in particular the unpublished Hotho 1823–1824¹² and the Dove from 1825, along with Jaeschke and Garniron's reconstruction of the 1825–1826 lectures), that Hegel's study of Böhme's writings is still in process during the Berlin years. Several important differences can be observed between the transcription from 1823 and the various versions from 1825. Hegel increasingly focuses on the theme of negativity: the way Böhme conceives of the element of negativity within God turns his mysticism, for Hegel, into an exceptionally vital dialectical approach.¹³ This important conclusion is at the heart of Hegel's interest in the philosophy of Jakob Böhme and can only be adequately grasped by carefully retracing the stages in Hegel's progressive discovery of Böhme's thought.

Taken as a whole, the three chapters in which this work is presented aim to demonstrate the philosophical significance of Hegel's approach to the writings of Jakob Böhme. This study thus contributes to filling an important gap in Hegel scholarship, which still lacks a properly detailed account of mysticism, especially that of Böhme. Hegel's reading of Böhme's *Theosophia revelata* may also serve as a possible start-

¹⁰ This position is maintained by Lamb (1980), 225: "There is little doubt that Hegel was hostile to mysticism, just as he was hostile to any other short-cut in philosophy".

¹¹ The assumption that Hegel's interpretation remained unchanged over the course of his life (see, for instance, Jaeschke (2003), 404) is in my view a direct consequence of the absence of any such study until now.

¹² Jaeschke and Garniron describe the Hotho (1823–1824) (= Ho) manuscript as follows: "Eine sorgfältige Reinschrift, nicht eine Ausarbeitung wie Hothos Heft zur Religionsphilosophie. Ho weist wenig Verständnisfehler auf, neigt aber mehrfach zur Verdichtung des Gehörten" (see V 6, xxxiii). J. Hoffmeister relied heavily on this manuscript for his edition of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, of which only the first volume was ever published (Hegel (1940)). See V 6, xlv.

¹³ See *Werke* 15, 317 (cf. TWA, 20, 118), where Böhme's conception of the Divine is defined by Hegel as 'the most vital dialectic' ("lebendigste Dialektik").

ing point for a more ambitious project, namely, the rediscovery of Böhme's writings in philosophical terms. The latter's writings are still too often exiled from the domain of philosophy and mistakenly confined to the confused and uncertain terrain of esotericism – unless, that is, they are completely ignored. Such a rediscovery was, I believe, also Hegel's objective as he read and interpreted Böhme. In this sense, the analysis of Hegel's commentary on the mysticism of Jakob Böhme, which is the object of this study, is intended also as an introduction to the philosophical depth that is present, *as Hegel writes*, in the forgotten writings of the mystical cobbler.

Chapter 1

The Reception of Böhme's Philosophy Around 1800

1 Preamble: Böhme's Comeback in Germany and the Romantic Reception

1.1 *The “Mystical Cobbler” and Franckenberg's Biography of Böhme*

In *Nachtwachen*, or *Nightwatches*, published anonymously under the pseudonym of Bonaventura in 1804, Jakob Böhme is named several times. From its very first appearance in a minor, short-lasting magazine, the *Journal von neuen deutschen Original Romanen*, the story aroused curiosity for its gothic, nocturnal atmosphere as well as for the difficulty in identifying the author, so that the theories as to its authorship included important names like Clemens Brentano, Friedrich Schlegel, Caroline Schlegel and even E.T.A. Hoffmann.¹ The mystery over the paternity of the book was resolved only recently, and the name of its author – a minor writer, August Klingemann – therefore remained unknown to his contemporaries. *The Nightwatches of Bonaventura* is certainly the only finished work by him that has left an indelible mark on the history of German literature. The fact that there are many references to Böhme is particularly interesting precisely because the book is emblematic of a literary production that never received the fame and attention reserved, for example, to the famous group of Jena Romantics. Böhme's presence in the text may therefore indicate the widespread interest in the figure of the mystical cobbler among German-speaking intellectuals during the period between the end of the 1700s and the early 1800s. Nor is Klingemann's “anonymous” book immune from the fascination that Böhme's life had exercised over Romantic literature. References to Böhme can, in effect, be found in works by far more important writers

¹ Cf. for example Schulz (1983), 438. Schulz records that Schelling was himself considered at first as the story's author (cf. *ibid.*). See also Dahnke and Höhle (1978), 453.

than Klingemann, starting with Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel, and even – though in an ironic and critical context – Kotzebue (without counting Schelling, of course, whose contact with exponents of the *Romantik* was particularly relevant in his formation).²

We therefore have the impression of finding ourselves before one of the most renowned and eminent authors in German Romantic literature, to such an extent that the mention of Böhme in *Nightwatches* was used by various commentators in attempts to discover the identity of the author of the mysterious text: among other reasons, the reference to the mystical cobbler would also help to give credence to the theory that the author was Schelling, who had a particular fondness for the mystic of Görlitz.³

Before considering in more detail the reasons and extent of the interest the Romantics had for Böhme, it will be useful to pause a little longer on Klingemann's story. In order to take a first look at the characteristics of the Romantic interpretation of the Böhman mystic, we will start with the passages in which the nightwatchman, the central character in the *Nightwatches*, names the shoemaker of Görlitz without concealing his full admiration for him.⁴

It is important to consider first of all in what context these references appear. Böhme makes his first appearance at the beginning of the first night's watch, at the end of a particularly melancholy scene in which the main character observes a family gathered around the body of a dying man and, moving away, he sings a tune for the dead. Music, in fact, as is explained immediately after, naturally accompanies the moment of death and Jakob Böhme himself claimed he heard a very sweet music just before his passing, a music that no one apart from the dying mystic could hear.⁵ Klingemann seems to be drawing directly from accounts, of clearly hagiographic origin, given by Abraham von Franckenberg in his famous biography of the mystic. As well as the description of Böhme's death to the accompaniment of divine music,⁶ referred to in the first vigil, Franckenberg's *Gründlicher und Wahrhafter*

²Schultz (1909), 84–85 refers to a study by Michel in Klingemann (1904), xliii, where he declares that no commentator would have considered an attribution of *Nightwatches* to philosophers such as Fichte or Hegel as being plausible. The case of Schelling, however, is different: Schelling – Michel argues – is not only a philosopher but also a *poet*, and it is for this reason that he seems to represent a possible answer to the question over the book's paternity. Schelling, moreover, had published several poems in *Musen Almanach* (1802) under the pseudonym Bonaventura (cf. *ibid.*, 67).

³*Ibid.*, 145. Schultz criticizes this suggestion, adducing as evidence the very fact that interest in Böhme was shared by the majority of Romantics, and could not therefore be used as a resolving factor to conclude the investigation. But when Schultz himself proposes the less famous Wetzel as author of the text, it is recalled that the prophetic Böhman style of his *Magischer Spiegel* goes well with the enthusiasm shown by the main character in *Nightwatches* for the mystical cobbler (*ibid.*, 260). On the line of reasoning that led to the suggestion of Wetzel as author of the *Nightwatches*, see also Filippini's introduction to Klingemann (1950).

⁴It should however be borne in mind that the story is not without its veiled sarcasm, and that the conclusion is marked by a deep nihilism (it is no coincidence that the story ends with the word *Nichts*). The young protagonist's enthusiasm for Böhme the mystic must therefore also be put into perspective.

⁵Cf. Klingemann (Klingemann 1974), 15–16; Klingemann (1950), 15.

⁶Cf. Benz (1959), 139.

Bericht (Thorough and Truthful Report) includes a whole series of fabulous and prophetic episodes that were said to have abounded in the earthly existence of the mystic of Görlitz, and which are described in great detail.⁷

The biography compiled by Franckenberg, which was also included in the edition of Böhme's works published in Amsterdam in 1682,⁸ would soon become the main source of information about the shoemaker's life. It was an important document but, as Koyré emphasizes,⁹ unacceptable from the biographical point of view, due to the author's obvious desire to present his spiritual master as a prophetic figure whose life was marked by events of a supernatural kind.

The fact that Franckenberg's work became compulsory reading for anyone who was interested in Böhme's life during the period when *Nightwatches* was written can be seen from many other documents, including a review that appeared in an issue of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* in February 1832. The book under review is *Jakob Böhme: Ein biographischer Denkstein* by De la Motte Fouqué, published the previous year, and it is judged severely and unreservedly. The book, in substance, is a reworking of Franckenberg's biography and shares its taste for descriptions of prophetic visions and supernatural encounters. "We still wait, therefore," concludes the reviewer, "for the *true* biography of Böhme."¹⁰ In short, in 1832 there are no other sources on the life of the mystic apart from Franckenberg's fanciful biography.¹¹

There is, as already recalled, a direct influence of Franckenberg's biography upon the image of the dying mystic who yields to divine music¹² – music, writes

⁷Franckenberg opens by describing Böhme as a *Wunder-Mann*, where *Wunder* means "miracle" and therefore refers to the supernatural aura which, according to the biographer, characterizes the whole of the mystic's life (cf. BS, vol. 10, 6. The account of the miraculous events begins immediately at p. 7).

⁸Franckenberg's biography was also included in the later editions of Böhme's writings. Cf. also Mayer (1999), 28–29. On the various manuscript versions of Franckenberg's *Life*, see Gilly (2007), 329–363.

⁹Koyré, (1929), 17: "ce n'est pas Boehme, c'est Franckenberg, qui était constamment préoccupé de présages. Boehme lui-même n'en parle jamais." Koyré concludes by stating that Böhme's life does not really lend itself to hagiographic treatment – unless the facts are forced in the way that Franckenberg has done – precisely because of the cobbler's sober, lucid character, far from the inclinations of a visionary. In this respect see also Cuniberto (2000), 35.

¹⁰Cf. ALZ, 1.37 (1832), 296: "*Böhme's wahre Biographie steht demnach noch zu erwarten*" (my italics). In exactly the same way that Koyré would do a hundred years later, the author of the review (who signs himself "K.R.") also underlines the fact that this way of recounting the life of Böhme seems so extraneous to the style with which Böhme portrays himself in his writings, which raises doubt as to whether de la Motte Fouqué actually knew the work of the mystic (cf. *ibid.*). This is indicated by the fact that, in a review of the book by J. F. Sillig, *Boehme. Ein biographischer Versuch* (Arnold, Pirna 1801), which appeared in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, published in Jena in July 1802, it was emphasized that the information about the life used by Sillig came entirely from Franckenberg's biography (ALZ, 3.215 (1802), 245).

¹¹Cf. Lüer (1997), 19, where it is stated that Franckenberg's *Bericht* was the starting and reference point for all subsequent biographies. Lüer also emphasizes one fundamental aspect: from Franckenberg's biography onward, the life and work of the mystic Jakob Böhme were clearly separated and each considered independently of the other (cf. *ibid.*).

¹²Cf. BS, vol. 10, 22.

Klingemann, is “mystical sister” of the dying.¹³ To expand this picture and add further details to the figure of the mystical cobbler represented in *Nightwatches*, we must look at the other passages in which the nightwatchman Kreuzgang, the central character in the story, refers to Böhme. The role played by Franckenberg's hagiographical text becomes even more relevant.

The plot of *Nightwatches* develops on two levels, which interact throughout the whole story until they are finally resolved in the last nightwatch, the sixteenth.¹⁴ In the fourth nightwatch we see the childhood of the main character, who leafs through the “book of his life” as if it were a series of pictures, or rather engravings. The third engraving shows the adoptive father of the *Nachtwächter*, a shoemaker hard at work (but his eyes seem absorbed in deep contemplation) while the main character sits on Hans Sachs' *Fastnachtsspiele* and reads from the pages of Jakob Böhme's *Aurora*. Hans Sachs and Böhme, writes Klingemann, shared the same occupation – both were shoemakers – as well as both being poets. Kreuzgang's adoptive father carries out the same work as well; the story suggests moreover that young Kreuzgang had also read Sachs and Böhme under his encouragement, so that father and son were also part of the group of mystical shoemakers. Böhme, just like Sachs, looked into the depths of his profession (Klingemann uses the verb *vertiefen*), to discern the mystery of his work and above all the divine mystery that is hidden beneath the surface of things.¹⁵ The mystical gift of Sachs and Böhme is in the end inseparable from their daily activity – one could almost say it was a consequence of it.¹⁶

Their figures are marked by a blend of the simplicity of manual experience and the mystical depth that this same experience is capable of revealing.¹⁷ We find ourselves, in effect, before a *model*, as will soon become clear.¹⁸

Klingemann's portrait of Böhme doesn't go beyond this superficial picture of Böhme the mystical cobbler who combines simple manual experience with the capacity to penetrate and understand divine mysteries. What is more, the mystic is considered as a truly poetic spirit, something that enables Kreuzgang himself to be presented to the reader as a great would-be poet, reduced to the position of nightwatchman. The only references – though indirect – to Böhme's work are found in the fourth nightwatch, in which it is said, for example, that the young protagonist claimed, like Böhme, he could read nature, in particular flowers, like a book. There are no specific references, even though, as already mentioned, the interpretation of

¹³ Klingemann (1950), 15.

¹⁴ On the structure of *Nightwatches*, see Dahnke (1978), 453.

¹⁵ Klingemann (1904), 40.

¹⁶ On the connection between *mystic*, *mystery* and occupation (*mestiere*) see Cuniberto (2000), 27 and the same author's introduction to Böhme (1996), 9.

¹⁷ The transition from observing the artifact, the shoe, to theological investigation is explained in the text from the mouth of Kreuzgang's father, and traces of subtle irony can be detected in his discourse (cf. *Nachtwachen des Bonaventura*, fourth nightwatch).

¹⁸ On the recurrence of the figure of the mystical cobbler between 1500 and 1600, see Koyré (1929), 1–3; see also Muratori (2012). I would also refer to a study of mine in which I examine in particular the role of G. Arnold and J. L. Mosheim in transmitting the model of the mystical cobbler as outlined by Franckenberg: Muratori (2011).

Aurora is given to Kreuzgang; yet it seems that various pages of Böhme dedicated to nature as a book to be comprehended and leafed through, or as a divine power that has become a palpable object under the touch of man, have been transformed into statements that are perhaps intentionally vague.¹⁹ Klingemann seems simply to introduce into the text what will, in Romantic literature, become 'commonplaces' around which a certain image of the shoemaker Jakob Böhme is built. In this sense, Franckenberg's *Life* has contributed to forming what could be described as a *standard* representation, hinging on the very contrast between the simplicity of the shoemaker's work and the radical importance of his prophetic role.

The process that led to the creation of this model of the mystical cobbler, which would have a particular effect on the Romantic interpretations of Böhme the mystic, was started and encouraged, at least in part, by Böhme himself. At the basis of the desire to show himself to disciples and readers as a simple instrument at the service of God,²⁰ one can in fact interpret the wish to present himself as the last of the Old Testament prophets, whose humility is not a sign of weakness but instead one of divine power, which chooses humble people to announce his revelation to the world.²¹ Although the roots and profile of the mystical cobbler presented in *Nightwatches* – and also, as we shall see shortly, in other texts of the same period – can therefore be found in the mystic's work itself, certain differences must nevertheless also be emphasized in the characteristics that Böhme ascribes to himself and to the perception of his own role. In *Aurora*, Böhme is certainly already insisting on the simplicity of his own situation, playing on the contrast between the humility of manual work and the divine election through which he had access to the deepest mysteries. But as the author of the review that appeared in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* was already pointing out, there is no trace of prophetic visions in the strict sense in the pages of Böhme, nor would he have ever described himself as a being half way between heaven and earth, as Franckenberg claims when commenting on the scene of the mystic's death.²² We must therefore question the story and evolution of what I have described as the standard image of the mystical cobbler, often

¹⁹ See BS, vol. 2, ch. 8, 12: "Du wirst kein Buch finden, da du die göttliche Weisheit könntest mehr inne finden zu forschen, als wenn du auf eine grüne und blühende Wiese gehst, da wirst du die wunderliche Kraft Gottes sehen, riechen und schmecken, wiewohl es nur ein Gleichniß ist [...]: aber dem Suchenden ist ein lieber Lehr=Meister, er findet sehr viel alda."

²⁰ See in this respect AuN, ch. 3. 1. of my introduction.

²¹ Benz (1959) discusses exactly this problem.

²² Cf. BS, vol. 10, 22. With regard to the absence in Böhme's work of prophetic themes, in the sense in which Franckenberg interprets them, see also Bächtold-Stäubli and Hoffmann-Krayer (2002), 1477: "Die schönsten und bekanntesten B.-Sagen hat Abraham von Franckenberg, sein Schüler, 1651 in einer erneuten Ausgabe der von ihm verfaßten *Vita* gegeben: der Gang in den hohlen Berg [...], die Begegnung mit dem Fremden und der Schuhkauf, das Simon-Maguserlebnis, B. weissagend bei David v. Schweinitz bei Seifersdorf bei Liegnitz 1622/23; sein Tod bei himmlischer Musik, – Sagen wie sie zwar mehr oder weniger allen Propheten eigen sind, von Franckenberg aber pansophisch gewendet. Heut erinnert man sich nur noch des Propheten B., obwohl er fast nie prophezeit hat, außer auf Drängen seiner Freunden."

accompanied by an eloquent picture portraying Böhme in his workshop absorbed in mystical contemplation, exactly like Kreuzgang's father in the fourth nightwatch.

Above all, Franckenberg's *Life* has played an essential role in transmitting information – though of a certain type – about the figure and work of Böhme in the problematic context of the circulation of his writings.²³ The censorship imposed by the judicial authorities of Görlitz in fact necessitated a direct, limited and cautious exchange between Böhme and his followers after the scandal that arose between 1612 and 1613 when Böhme wrote his first book, *Aurora*.²⁴ Böhme's subsequent writings were also condemned to an anomalous circulation, outside all official channels – and this, it should be noted, was already happening in the years leading up to Böhme's death. Only one of Böhme's books (*Der Weg zu Christo*, 1624) was published while he was still alive; after his death most of his writings, including manuscripts and copies made by admirers, were dispersed, probably first kept by the followers themselves and later becoming reference texts for esoteric communities of various kinds.²⁵ Several original manuscripts, as well as copies, found their way to Holland through the merchant van Beyerland and were eventually published in Amsterdam. Böhme's writings therefore temporarily disappeared from the German literary panorama and were propagated instead in the country of origin of van Beyerland, who also devoted himself to translating them into Dutch, thus further promoting their circulation.

In this respect, the correspondence between Franckenberg and van Beyerland provides important evidence of the joint work carried out by the two scholars in collecting together Böhme's writings in the years leading up to the first edition in Amsterdam. In a letter to the Dutch merchant of 22 April 1640,²⁶ Franckenberg announces for example that he has discovered several autograph papers of Böhme in the house of Abraham von Sommerfeld, another admirer of Böhme, who had corresponded with the shoemaker himself. Franckenberg therefore asks van Beyerland, who is compiling a catalogue for a forthcoming edition, if the new short texts he has just discovered (including a *Vorrede* to *Aurora* dating back to 1620 and several *Tabellen*), are already included in the list; if not, he promises to send the originals or a copy to add to the autograph papers already in van Beyerland's possession. This letter therefore demonstrates the patient and hard work Böhme's followers were carrying out at his death, searching among transcripts of originals and trying to complete a full catalogue of his writings. Franckenberg in particular seems to have played the important role of *go-between*.

²³ Abraham von Franckenberg wrote works of a "mystical and natural philosophical" nature and is remembered above all as the author of Böhme's biography. J. Telle has challenged the exclusivity of this role given to Franckenberg and indeed suggests that it is incorrect to define this German intellectual as a fervent follower, almost an apostle of Böhme (cf. Franckenberg (1995), 37–38).

²⁴ Cf. AuN, 15 et seq.

²⁵ For further details I refer to my introduction to AuN and to Muratori (2011).

²⁶ Cf. Franckenberg (1995), 120. See also the letter Franckenberg wrote to van Beyerland on 13 May 1640 in which projects are discussed for the phases after cataloguing and publication (cf. *ibid.*, 125–126).

It is significant that the 'catalyst', so to speak, is someone who is living outside Germany: Franckenberg in fact expresses the intention of contributing toward the cataloguing already begun by van Beyerland without beginning one of his own, and even suggests sending the originals he has found directly to Holland so they can be inspected. In this way, a sort of documentary migration was being encouraged from Germany to Holland, where Böhme was enthusiastically received between 1600 and 1700, and the country of adoption for his writings was certainly more accommodating than his country of origin, where the accusation of heresy still constituted an insurmountable obstacle along the path to a possible acceptance of his works.

But the distribution of Böhme's writings in Germany and the possibility of access to the sources of his philosophy must still have been very limited at the beginning of the following century if it is true that Franz von Baader, perhaps the greatest nineteenth-century expert on the thinking of the German shoemaker, came into contact with Böhme for the first time during his travels in England.²⁷ On the other side of the English Channel, in fact, Böhme's writings had become extraordinarily widespread, having arrived directly from Holland during the reign of Charles I.²⁸ Hegel's own edition of the works had also been sent to him from abroad, in this case directly from Holland, by one of his students from his time in Jena, P. G. van Ghert.²⁹ It is no coincidence that Hegel and Baader encounter Böhme's work outside Germany: Holland and England were in fact the two countries where Böhme's thought had spread most rapidly, leaving a permanent and profound mark on the literature of both places.

1.2 Böhme and the Jena Circle

Let us return one last time to the *Nightwatches of Bonaventura*: an important detail in reconstructing the gradual spread of interest among Romantics in Böhme's mysticism comes in fact from the biography of the author, August Klingemann, who in 1798 is enrolled at the law faculty at the University of Jena. At Jena, a focal point for German Romanticism, Klingemann follows the lessons of Fichte and Schelling,

²⁷ Cf. Hamberger (1855), 9: "St. Martins 'Irrthümer und Wahrheiten' lernte er erst im darauf folgenden Jahre kennen, Böhme erst weit später während seines Aufenthalts in England, nachdem er die eigentlichen Grundgedanken dieses merkwürdigen Mannes schon anticipirt, wenigstens die offenbarsten Anklänge an dieselben aus den Tiefen seines eigenen Geistes bereits hervorgeholt hatte." Baader begins to read Saint-Martin, himself an avid reader of Böhme, at the age of twenty-two (one notes immediately that Baader read *first* Saint-Martin and only later, through reading Saint-Martin himself, does he arrive at the writings of Jakob Böhme (cf. below, Chap. 1, Sect. 2.2). Baader traveled in England between 1792 and 1796. Cf. also Procesi Xella (1976), 57.

²⁸ For a very brief account of how Böhme's works were received in England, see: AuN, ch. 2. 1 of my introduction. On the reception of Böhme in London I refer to Muratori (2015).

²⁹ We shall be returning to this important point later (cf. below, Chap. 1, Sect. 3.1.1).

becomes friendly with Clemens Brentano, and comes into contact with the circle that has formed around the Schlegel brothers.³⁰

The Jena group itself seems to have played a key role in the early phases of Böhme's reception between the end of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, after years of relative silence around his name, and after his writings had left for Holland and England. According to Burath, Jakob Böhme would be portrayed, alongside Klopstock, Hamann, Herder, Goethe and Schiller, as one of the tutelary deities of the new generation of Romantics at Jena. This new generation included Klingemann himself who, in the journal *Memnon* that he himself founded, seems to be making a direct reference to the *Morgenröte im Aufgang* (*Aurora*) when he writes: "When we feel the coming of day, it is time to announce the dawn."³¹ The spiritual dawn already announced in the title of Böhme's first work is therefore to be interpreted as a symbol of the fulfillment of an epoch-making change: Böhme's *Aurora* represented, in Burath's view, nothing less than one of the foundations of the new Romantic culture. Whether Klingemann intended to make a direct reference to Böhme in that short fragment, or whether it was a more general comment (of course the metaphor of dawn doesn't belong only to Böhme), Burath's view has the merit of drawing attention to the climate of general enthusiasm for Jakob Böhme and moreover for his prophetic dawn. Burath's idea is, in this sense, certainly not new but it ties directly with a commonly held view – generally accepted but rarely investigated in detail – of an all-pervading presence of Böhme's language and themes in the *Frühromantik* imagination, starting off with the expectations of rebirth expressed through the metaphor of the rising dawn, shared also by authors such as Novalis and F. Schlegel.³²

But only by reconstructing the various phases of Böhme's reception, with particular attention to the gradual spread of the mystical texts, will it be possible to make any conjecture as to the real influence exercised by Böhme's work on early German Romanticism, leaving aside Burath's vague considerations regarding the many allusions to Böhme's dawn in the writings of the Romantics and instead considering more closely the role played by that model constructed from the figure of the mystical cobbler. It will be seen, in fact, how Böhme's Romantic readers appropriate certain key features that already belonged to the exegetic tradition opened up by Franckenberg; but at the same time, the Romantic interpretation of Böhme's philosophy brings certain new elements into the picture that we have already outlined: in effect, one can talk about a Romantic interpretation of Böhme precisely because these elements are shared by various readers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In particular, consideration will be given to the two most

³⁰ On Klingemann's years at Jena, see Burath (1948), ch. 2.

³¹ Ibid., 66: "Wenn wir den Tag ahnen, ist es Zeit, auf die Morgenröte hinzudeuten."

³² Cf. ibid., 65: "Dazu kam nun, daß Jacob Böhmes 'Aurora oder die Morgenröte im Aufgang' (1612) von der jungen Generation als eines der 'Urbücher der neuen Kultur' gefeiert wurde. Friedrich Schlegel nannte es 'die Morgenröte begrüßen', wenn er seine Ideen aussprach."

exemplary interpreters of the mystical cobbler, Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel, who played a particularly important role in the Romantic reception of Böhme.³³

1.2.1 Tieck's "Hypochondriac Enthusiasm" for Böhme's Writings

Ludwig Tieck was one of the first members of the Schlegel brothers' circle to show interest in the work of Böhme;³⁴ it was thanks to his enthusiastic presentations that the themes of Böhme's mysticism entered into the discussions of the group founded by the Schlegels.³⁵ Novalis and other intellectuals linked to the group came into contact with the figure of Böhme through Tieck, who therefore had an important function of precursor and, at the same time, of intermediary.³⁶ It is not unlikely that Klingemann himself, though not taking an active part in the group's discussions on Böhme, nevertheless sensed the climate of excitement surrounding Tieck's rediscovery of Böhme and his presentations at the Schlegel house, which was followed by the spread of a wider interest in the cobbler and his mystical philosophy. In this sense Pikulik has claimed that the introduction of Böhme's mysticism into the *Frühromantik* movement of Jena was one of the key aspects of Tieck's literary activity, and that Jakob Böhme was one of his most important personal discoveries.³⁷

On the recommendation of Tieck, who already owned a copy of *Aurora* in 1797,³⁸ Novalis borrowed Böhme's work from the library at Weimar in August 1799,

³³ While the Romantic reception of Böhme was complex and had many aspects, it has to be emphasized from the very beginning that Enlightenment thinkers had given Böhme no consideration at all, precisely due to the fanciful and confused nature of the shoemaker's writings, but perhaps even more because of the prejudices generated by the standard image of the inspired mystic-prophet that accompanied and often preceded a direct knowledge of Böhme's work between 1700 and 1800 (cf. Mayer (1999), 45). Crescenzi (1996), 22, refers to a real "moral revulsion toward the *Schwärmerei* from representatives of the *Aufklärung*". Cf. also Sørensen (1963), 134: "In allen westeuropäischen Ländern war der Name Böhmes in den rationalistischen Kreisen als Ausdruck für Unverstand und mystischen Unsinn fast sprichwörtlich geworden".

³⁴ Lüer (1997), 46–57, provides a detailed bibliography of existing studies on Tieck's reception of Böhme's mysticism.

³⁵ Cf. Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 245: "Im Sommer 1799 traf Ludwig Tieck zum ersten Male in Jena ein um Schlegel zu besuchen, und gleichzeitig kam Novalis von Weißenfels herüber. Im Oktober brachte Tieck zu längerem Aufenthalte seine Familie mit und fand in Schlegels Haus Unterkunft, von Novalis häufig besucht. Diesen wie Schelling hatte er sich durch seine Volksmärchen gewonnen und machte nun die beiden neuen Freunde auch mit Jakob Böhme bekannt, über welchen er auch den Schlegels ein Gedicht für das Athenäum verhielt." See also Walsh (1978), 317.

³⁶ R. Paulin, in his famous biography of Tieck, also draws attention to the fact that Novalis's interest in Böhme was certainly encouraged by Tieck exhortations to read the works of the mystic (cf. Paulin (1985), 104 et seq.) On the key role of Tieck cf. Mayer (1999), 51: "the Romantics do not mention any intermediate source for their discovery of Böhme, but on the contrary expressly derive it from Tieck's chance encounter with *Aurora*".

³⁷ Pikulik (2000), 16–17.

³⁸ Cf. Lüer (1997), 34.

promising his friend that from then on he would carefully study it.³⁹ The presence of a complete edition of Böhme's writings in nearby Weimar, whose library at that time boasted a particularly fine collection that included rare works, is a factor of primary importance, given that there were very few copies in private hands at that time. As for the library at Jena, it can be supposed that the two more recent editions of *Theosophia Revelata* (of 1715 and 1730) were acquired somewhere between 1800 and 1820, the year in which a catalogue was compiled that included both titles.⁴⁰ In any event, there can be no doubt that the creation of interest in Böhme the mystic in the city of Jena, and in particular among the intellectuals close to the Schlegel brothers, was possible above all thanks to the contribution of Tieck, who used the regular meetings of the circle as a platform to present the object of his recent discoveries and – at that time – the object of his great admiration.⁴¹ But the conversations on Böhme that were started by Tieck had two effects: while on the one hand they aroused interest and curiosity (especially, as already indicated, from Novalis and F. Schlegel), on the other hand they brought obstinate opposition, particularly from Fichte. At the opposite extreme to the distance shown by Fichte, Plitt refers to the more open and amenable attitude shown by Schelling himself.⁴² Yet, much as with the others who took part in the conversations led by Tieck, it is not easy to establish whether Schelling had already by that time moved from a general curiosity for Böhme's mysticism to one of actively reading his writings.⁴³ This problem of whether or not there had been a transition from simple interest to deeper study, which, as we have seen, was a crucial point for the transmission of the image of the mystical cobbler over the hundred years following his death, is fundamentally important in understanding the nature of Jakob Böhme's reception by the Romantics, and its evolution.

Particularly interesting are the adjectives chosen by Plitt to describe Tieck's exposition – passionate (*begeistert*) and at the same time pugnacious, in replying to Fichte's disapproval – as well as the nouns used by Fichte to describe Böhme –

³⁹Cf. Mayer (1999), 9. On the exchange of views between Tieck and Novalis on Böhme's mysticism, see also Pikulik (2000), 212.

⁴⁰For the research on the catalogues at the *Handschriften-Abteilung* of Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek I am grateful to Ina Mille.

⁴¹It is relevant to mention the fact that the publication of Böhme's works edited by Gichtel was present in Tieck's private library (cf. Anonymous (1970 [1849]), 328).

⁴²Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 246–247: "Tieck trat dazu, wie schon erwähnt ward, noch als begeisterter Lobredner Jakob Böhme's auf und hatte manchen Kampf für ihn bestehen, denn besonders Fichte wollte von dem Schwärmer oder 'verworrenen Träumer' nichts wissen, während Schelling sich den Böhmeschen Ideen zugänglich zeigte; doch läßt sich nicht erweisen, daß er damals schon die Schriften des Theosophen, die er zum Theil kannte, genauer studirt habe, vielmehr macht ein späteres Wort von ihm das letztere unwahrscheinlich."

⁴³P. Mayer examines in detail the direct access and reading of Böhme's work by the Jena group, including Schelling himself, arguing that the general and rather vague interest in the mystic was transformed only rarely into an active study of his writings (cf. Mayer (1999)). According to S. Wollgast however, there can be no doubt that Schelling was introduced to the reading of Böhme through Tieck and the circle of Jena Romantics (cf. Wollgast (1976), 164).

enthusiast (*Schwärmer*), dreamer (*Träumer*).⁴⁴ The *Begeisterung*⁴⁵ attributed to Tieck is strictly linked to the word *Schwärmer* used by Fichte in a disparaging manner: in fact, the word *Schwärmer* – adopted for the first time by Luther to describe those thinkers who are too independent and critical of the Reformation (for example, Andreas Bodenstein, better known as Karlstadt) – soon became a synonym of *fanaticus*, *sectarius*, *haereticus*, but with particular reference to the characteristics of exaltation, of boundless excitement, so that between 1700 and 1800 the word began to be generally used to define a restless spirit.⁴⁶ It is therefore clear that headlong passion (together often with a subversive tendency) is the distinctive feature of *Schwärmer* and Fichte's criticism must have been directed at both the *enthusiast* Jakob Böhme as well as Tieck's headlong passion for the mystic, such as to make the latter himself almost a *Schwärmer*. In effect, Tieck's relationship with Böhme's work was marked by alternate phases of enthusiastic and passionate reading and periods of distance and skeptical indifference, with a seesaw attitude that also characterized Tieck's approach to his own literary production, which Hegel described ironically in the Berlin review of Solger's writings as the development of a genuine hypochondria.⁴⁷

Tieck's reception of Böhme's mysticism can be divided into two main periods, of which the first – certainly, from our point of view, the more interesting – covers the years 1798–1802 (the meetings of the Jena circle in which Tieck spoke several times on Böhme's mysticism were between 1799 and 1801);⁴⁸ the second began in 1817 and continued to the final years of his literary activity.⁴⁹ As confirmation of the fact that the Schlegel circle played a prime role in the discovery of Böhme the mystic, Paola Mayer has underlined that Tieck abandoned his reading of Böhme's work, at least for a short time, after the group had disbanded.⁵⁰ It is also worth noting that Tieck's return to studying Böhme's work around 1817 coincided in time

⁴⁴ Cf. Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 246–247.

⁴⁵ I translate *Begeisterung* as *passion* or *inspiration*, to distinguish it from *Schwärmerei*, a more specific term than *Begeisterung* which I render as *excessive enthusiasm*. Tieck would therefore have presented his discovery of Böhme's philosophy in an *impassioned* way; in Fichte's view, the passion of Tieck's approach toward the shoemaker is absolutely anti-philosophical. This doesn't alter the fact that *Begeisterung* and *Schwärmerei* are related and often used as synonyms.

⁴⁶ Cf. DW, *sub voce* *Schwärmer*: "Irrgeist, unruhigen Mensch."

⁴⁷ *Werke* 16, 460–461 (cf. TWA 11, 228–229). We shall return later to Hegel's review of *Solgers nachgelassene Schriften und Briefwechsel* (Solger (1826)), a text of fundamental importance in understanding the reasons for Hegel's criticism of the mystical tendency of Romanticism (cf. below, Sect. 2.2.2).

⁴⁸ According to Ederheimer (1904), 26, it is already possible to trace a clear influence of Böhme's mysticism in *Abdallah* (1792), and in particular in the teachings of Master Omar (who turns out in the last part of the story to be an ambiguous and false character) to his disciple Abdallah. Ederheimer writes in fact: "Tieck lernte Jacob Boehme sehr früh kennen" (ibid.). E. Lüer points out however that in the years that were crucial in his study of Böhme's mysticism (1799–1803), Tieck worked on *Der Runenberg*, in which the influence of reading Böhme would be more clearly noticeable (cf. Lüer (1997), 46).

⁴⁹ Cf. Mayer (1999), 56 et seq.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 60.

with an exchange of letters between Tieck and Coleridge (through the mediation of Henry Crabb Robinson), in which there is a reference to Böhme.⁵¹ Coleridge – himself an enthusiastic reader of the shoemaker's writings – also seems to regard Tieck as an important source of information about the spread of interest for Böhme in Germany between 1700 and 1800.⁵²

While it is difficult to establish with any certainty if, and to what extent, the other members of the circle, the so-called *Schlegeleri*, had direct access to Böhme's writings, there is no doubt in the case of Tieck that his enthusiasm for the shoemaker was accompanied by a reading of his texts: a copy of his complete works in the publication edited by Gichtel was to be found in his personal library when it was sold in Berlin after his death and for which occasion a detailed catalogue was compiled.⁵³ But during the early stage of his study, Tieck seems to absorb from Böhme only isolated linguistic images or expressions and not an organic philosophical vision,⁵⁴ so that there still remains a doubt as to the extent and depth of his reading of Böhme in the years of his visits to the Jena circle. It is certain, however, that the discussions about Böhme's mysticism that Tieck had started aroused the interest of at least half of those who regularly attended the Schlegel group (including Novalis, Ritter and F. Schlegel, leaving the case of Schelling aside for the moment), who then each declared their intention of devoting themselves to reading Böhme's work.⁵⁵ Tieck thus set off an operation of transposition: not only did Böhme's mysticism become one of the subjects discussed by the intellectuals of Jena but through them it became absorbed within the very "spirit of the Romantics".⁵⁶ According to Ederheimer, in fact, the generation of the Romantics of Jena, starting from Tieck, found in Böhme nothing less than the precursor of Romanticism, a

⁵¹ Cf. Coleridge (1956–1971), vol. 4, 750–751. Coleridge writes to Tieck on 4 July 1817: "Before my visit to Germany in September, 1798, I had adopted (probably from Behmen's Aurora, which I had *conjured over* at School) the idea, that Sound was = Light under the præpotence of Gravitation, and Color = Gravitation under the præpotence of Light: and I have never seen reason to change my faith in this respect."

⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, 742: Coleridge writes in fact to Henry Crabb Robinson, who had stayed in Jena during the years between 1802 and 1805. "Mr. Tieck mentioned an old German Divine – Was it Tauler? I find in Heinsius three works under this name [...]. Would you be so good as to ask Mr Tieck if this be the man, and this a correct list of his writings? Likewise, whether there were any Followers of Jacob Behmen, of any note or worth, about the same time?" There was also a meeting between Coleridge and Tieck in England in 1817; Robinson gives an account of it in his personal diary (Robinson (1938), vol. 1, 208). On Robinson at Jena, see Robinson (2010) (see in particular the introduction of J. Vigus).

⁵³ Anonymous (1970 [1849]), 328: "Böhme, Jac. Alle göttliche Schriften etc. Herausg. mit B's Leben v. J. G. Gichtels. Portr. 8vo. s. l. 1715."

⁵⁴ In his study of the Romantic reception of Böhme's mysticism, Ederheimer tries to examine Böhme's language and expressions in the three cited works. But in most cases the author is unable to develop a convincing argument. So far as echoes of Böhme in *Der Runenberg* and in *Kaiser Octavianus*, see Paulin (1985), 141–142. L. Pikulik points to the effect of Böhme's *Naturmystik* on Tieck's *Phantastus* and *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (Pikulik (2000), 258).

⁵⁵ Cf. Mayer (1999), 101.

⁵⁶ Ederheimer (1904), 66.

Romantic before the Romantics, whose mystical vision conformed with that of Romanticism to such a degree as to constitute not only a source of inspiration but almost a precedent to be reflected.⁵⁷

Before considering in more detail the reasons for the intrinsic Romanticism, so to speak, in Böhme's work, which Ederheimer uses almost to justify the sympathy the Romantics felt toward the cobbler of Görlitz, it is necessary to draw attention once again to the complex question of the actual availability of the texts.⁵⁸ Paola Mayer has carried out a careful study of this problem, which enables us to understand how the model of the mystical cobbler continued also to influence the Romantic reception of Böhme, characterized by a slow and often fragmented (as in the case of Tieck) encounter with the mystic's work, at a crossroads marking the start of a new phase in the study of Böhme's thought – which, according to some critics, would never take off within the *Romantik*⁵⁹ – and a marked tendency toward almost holy veneration of the figure of the mystical cobbler. Following therefore the general lines of Mayer's provocation, according to which the relationship of the Romantics with Böhme's mysticism takes the form, in various cases, of an arbitrary reinvention of the figure of the shoemaker inspired by the traditions already created by Franckenberg, it is necessary to consider the Romantic reception of Böhme in terms of a complex phenomenon which opens the door to the reintroduction of Böhme's work in Germany and at the same time becomes heavily influenced by the hagiographic interpretation of the mystic's life, which was able to spread due to the very absence of principal sources.

In effect, Tieck's first encounter with Böhme's writings around 1798 happens completely by chance, as he himself admits. In *An den Grafen Wolf von Baudissin aus Holstein* he states that he had been led to read Böhme by a nostalgia, by a passion for the religious element which had developed directly from his love of poetry. His encounter with Böhme's work is described in terms of a genuine *revelation*.⁶⁰ In a letter to Novalis dated 2 December 1798, Friedrich Schlegel declares: "Tieck is studying Jakob Böhme with great passion. He is surely on the right path

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10–11: "Ihrer ganzen Denkweise nach sind die Romantiker ihm [Böhme] verwandt, sein Leben und Wirken, gewidmet der Treue, der Wahrhaftigkeit, verbunden mit einer glühenden Phantasie, war an sich schon angetan, die Aufmerksamkeit der Romantiker auf sich zu lenken. Er selbst war Romantiker. Die meisten jener Grundzüge, die das Wesen der Romantik ausmachen, finden in ihm ihr Spiegelbild."

⁵⁸ In addition to Mayer (1999), see also Mayer (1996), 247–259.

⁵⁹ Cf. Baumgardt (1927), 224–225. According to Baumgardt, Baader is to be regarded as the only scholar to have really studied Böhme in the years of the *Romantik*, to which he nevertheless remained at least partially extraneous.

⁶⁰ Cf. Tieck (1966), vol. 11, lxxiii et seq. (cited also in Lürer (1997), 35): "Indem ich, von selbst getrieben, nach Vollständigkeit, oder Umsicht strebte, entwirrte sich aus der Liebe zur Poesie eine Sehnsucht zum Religiösen, ein Zufall gab mir den Böhme in die Hand, und ich ward geblendet von dem Glanz des innigsten, blühendsten Lebens, von der Fülle der Erkenntniß, erschüttert ward ich von dem Tiefsinn, und von dem Aufschluß beglückt, der sich aus diesem neuentdeckten Reiche über alle Rätsel des Lebens und des Geistes verbreitete." See also Mayer (1999), 56.

there",⁶¹ from which can be seen the attention with which Tieck's discovery of Böhme's mysticism was also followed by other members of the Jena circle. The reference to passion – "the love of poetry", out of which his interest in Böhme's mysticism developed, and the love, the passion which, according to Schlegel, animated his discovery of Böhme's writings – is a central element in Tieck's reception of Böhme's thought, and also enables us to sense the tone of his presentations at the Schlegel house. Tieck in fact arrives at the mysticism through his poetry: the mysticism is therefore seen as the direct continuation and natural fulfillment of the poet's work.

In his review of the writings of Solger already mentioned, Hegel makes a significant attack on the way that Tieck describes the birth of his passion for the mystics (and for Böhme in particular): starting precisely here, from Hegel's criticism, it is possible to reconstruct the characteristics of the interpretation of Böhme that was begun by Tieck and continued, as we shall see, by other members of the Jena group of Romantics. A crucial passage in the review of Solger's writings gives us a first glimpse of Hegel's objections to the Romantic reception of Böhme, highlighting already several fundamental elements in Hegel's attitude to Böhme's mysticism, to which he will later return in detail.

Thus he was led by "the love of poetry, of the eccentric and antique, initially with almost sacrilegious frivolity" (it is not evident in what the sacrilege would have consisted) "to the mystics, especially to J. Böhme, who so took possession of all my vital forces that I wanted only from this perspective to understand Christianity, the most vital word in the image of the struggling and self-transfiguring forces of nature, and now all ancient and more recent philosophy became for me only a *historical* phenomenon" (the opposite happens with philosophical cognition, since mysticism and its formations become historical phenomena to it). "From my wonderland I read Fichte and Schelling, and found them *light*, not *profound* enough, and at the same time only silhouettes or fragments of that infinite sphere full of wonders" (*light*, because the mystical need was concerned only with the general sense, the abstract idea [...], not with thought as such; not *profound* enough because in the form and development of thought the appearance of depth dissolves for the person who is ignorant of thought, since one tends to consider a content deep only in the condition of its concentration and often, as happens mostly in J. Böhme, of fantastical confusion and rigidity, but one tends to mistake the depth in its unfolding).⁶²

⁶¹ KFSA, vol. 24: *Die Periode des Athenäums* (25 Juli 1797 - Ende August 1799), 207: "Tieck studiert den Jakob Böhme mit großer Liebe. Er ist da gewiß auf dem rechten Wege."

⁶² *Werke* 16, 458–459 (cf. TWA 11, 227): "so führte ihn 'die Liebe zur Poesie, zum Sonderbaren und Alten, anfangs fast mit *frevlem* Leichtsinne (– worin das Frevelhafte bestanden hätte, sieht man nicht –) zu den *Mystikern*, vorzüglich zu *J. Böhme*, der sich aller meiner Lebenskräfte so bemächtigt hatte, daß ich nur von hier aus das Christentum verstehen wollte, das lebendigste Wort im Abbild der ringenden und sich verklärenden Naturkräfte, und nun wurde mir alle alte und neuere Philosophie nur *historische* Erscheinung' (das Umgekehrte geschieht der philosophischen Erkenntniß, als welcher der Mystizismus und dessen Gestaltungen zu historischen Erscheinungen werden –); 'Von meinem Wunderlande aus las ich *Fichte* und *Schelling* und fand sie *leicht*, nicht *tief* genug, und gleichsam nur als Silhouetten oder Scheiben aus jener unendlichen Kugel voll Wunder' (– *leicht*, weil es dem mystischen Bedürfniß nur um den allgemeinen Sinn, die abstrakte Idee [...] nicht um das Denken als solches zu thun war; nicht *tief* genug, weil in der Form und

Hegel's criticism is particularly exact:⁶³ the quotes from Tieck are followed in parentheses by Hegel's objections, often in a sarcastic tone. The text therefore offers a fairly clear presentation of the key points that form the basis of Tieck's interpretation of mysticism in general and Böhme's in particular. Alongside his love of poetry which had triggered his interest in mysticism, there was also his curiosity for all that was extraordinary, unusual and antique, so that Tieck began to interest himself in the mystics with what he later described as a "sacrilegious frivolity" – and of what exactly this sacrilege consisted is not apparent, Hegel observes ironically.⁶⁴ Böhme's mysticism, into which Tieck plunges and passionately devotes himself, becomes his *Wunderlande*, his wonderland, from which to observe and judge the developments in the new German philosophy – Fichte and Schelling – which in comparison seem too *light*, or lacking in depth, according to the German text. One notes the term *Wunder*, which means *extraordinary* or *miraculous*, and plays a key part in the story of the master's life as told by the disciple Franckenberg, where Böhme was presented as an almost divine being. Tieck's words echo the same point of view expressed by Franckenberg, so that, further on in the text referred to, Böhme's mysticism is described as "an infinite magic sphere" (or, literally, an infinite sphere *full of miracles*, "unendlich[e] Kugel voll Wunder"), of which the philosophies of Schelling and Fichte are only partial and incomplete visions. According to Tieck the mystical approach therefore consists of plummeting into the depths of an extraordinary abyss, from which and through which to reconsider not only the history of philosophy (new philosophies suddenly appear only as historical expressions, phenomena), but also Christianity itself. Hegel's comment about Tieck's mystical enthusiasm hinges precisely on the opposition between the accusation of superficiality made against the new German philosophy and the depth of recently discovered mysticism: Tieck in fact wrongly applies this criterion, without giving due attention to the systematic development of each philosophy (or rather to the *achievement* of depth), but allowing himself to be dragged along by the imaginative confusion and the apparent depth of certain mysticism – where the accusation is directed principally at certain aspects of Böhme's mysticism.⁶⁵

Entwicklung des Gedankens der Schein der Tiefe dem des Gedankens Unkundigen verschwindet, denn tief pflegt man einen Gehalt nur im Zustand seiner Konzentration und oft, wie er bei J. Böhme am meisten vorkommt, einer phantastischen Verwirrung und Härte zu finden, das Tiefe aber in seiner Entfaltung zu verkennen –)." Hegel quotes from a letter from Tieck to Solger.

⁶³ Pöggeler (1999) commented on Hegel's criticism of Tieck in *Solger-Rezension*. In particular, on the passage I have quoted, see 212.

⁶⁴ The same letter of Tieck cited by Hegel and also referred to by J. von Eichendorff in his *Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands*. Eichendorff, however, comments on the expression "mit frevlem Leichtsinn" ("with sacrilegious frivolity") referring to Tieck's duplicitous relationship with Böhme's mysticism, a wavering between frantic enthusiasm and bitter delusion (cf. Eichendorff (1970–1988), vol. 3, 800–801).

⁶⁵ The accusation of *false depth* directed toward Böhme ought to be discussed in its own context: Hegel certainly doesn't consider Böhme's mysticism as *superficial* (*leicht*, to use Tieck's word), as it might seem from these lines, but on the contrary, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*

But what characterizes Tieck's approach to Böhme's mysticism is above all the *mediation* which, as he himself declares and as Hegel relates in his review of Solger's writings, leads him to discover the mystics, meaning poetry.⁶⁶ Mysticism and poetry, from Tieck's point of view, have in fact a remarkable affinity, and this is why he declares that he began reading the mystics from poetry. Indeed it could be said that, according to Tieck, poetry is found completely in mysticism and mysticism in turn throws light on the possibilities intrinsic to the work of the poet: "only in poetry did I recognise mysticism and holiness",⁶⁷ as if to say that poetry reveals both the path of mysticism and the understanding of sanctity, giving expression to the "longing for the religious" ("Sehnsucht zum Religiösen").⁶⁸

The interconnection between poetry, mysticism and religious sentiment provides the context within which Tieck introduces his interpretation of the work – and even more the figure – of Jakob Böhme. Even his presentation of Böhme's mysticism to the Schlegel group was therefore heavily influenced by his own guiding ideas about Böhme's thought, and first of all by the conviction that there is a profound link between poetry and mysticism which can be understood particularly clearly in the case of the Görlitz shoemaker. Not only does his love of poetry result in his interest in the mystics, but the mystic himself (in this particular case Böhme) is regarded by Tieck as a sort of poet, who at times seems to take on the clear characteristics of the prophet.⁶⁹

This is the context of Hegel's final critical observation with which the passage quoted ends, aimed at Tieck's enthusiasm for the "fantastical confusion" that is typical of Böhme's writing. The term *fantastical* (*phantastisch*) in fact refers to the specific role played by *fantasy* in the *Frühromantiker's* elaboration of the concept and the role of poetry. Fantasy, in Ederheimer's view, represents the strongest point of contact between *Poesie*, a fundamental theme for the Romantics of the Jena circle, and the mysticism of Böhme: based on this common link is not only the personal relationship of Tieck with the work of Böhme, but also and above all the attraction that the figure of the mystical cobbler could exercise more generally on

dedicated to the shoemaker, he repeatedly praises his *philosophical depth*. In this sense Hegel's accusation is directed more to the fact that Tieck tends to underline the less important aspects of Böhme's mysticism (with particular reference to the *fantastical confusion*), thus misunderstanding the real philosophical significance of his thought, which lies elsewhere.

⁶⁶ On the key role played by poetry in Tieck's works, see Eichendorff (1970–1988), vol. 3, 797, who refers to the "revolution against the pompous worldprose" ("Revolution gegen die aufgeblasene Weltprosa") of Tieck and Novalis. See also von Friesen (1871), vol. 2, 166: "Was Tieck an J. Böhme zumeist fesseln mußte, ist mit wenigen Worten ausgesprochen. Es ist die tiefsinnige und erhabene Poesie, die, ungeachtet aller Schwächen und Mängel, aus seinen Schriften herausstrahlt" (also quoted in Lürer (1997), 38).

⁶⁷ Cited in Eichendorff (1970–1988), vol. 3, 799: "Nur in der Poesie erkannte ich die Mystik und das Heilige".

⁶⁸ Tieck (1966), lxxviii et seq.

⁶⁹ Cf. Mayer (1999), 56. It is particularly interesting to note that in the years in which Tieck's enthusiasm for Böhme's work is overtaken by disenchantment and delusion, the prophet Jakob Böhme is transformed in Tieck's view into a *false prophet* (ibid., 67).

various members of the first generation of Romantics.⁷⁰ Through Jakob Böhme the Romantics, following Tieck, reach an awareness of the fact that a certain type of mysticism is naturally rooted in the *Romantik* itself, which is represented almost as a development and a reworking of the purposes of mysticism.⁷¹

In this respect it seems particularly significant that the reception of Böhme's mysticism by the Romantics occurred in several cases also in the form of poetry, demonstrating the inner harmony of Böhme's baroque mysticism and their poetical expression. Novalis for example, with whom Tieck would have immediately shared his new interest during the years between 1798 and 1801, writes to his friend that he anxiously awaits his poetry on Böhme.⁷² Although Böhman images and expressions are to be found in various poetical compositions by Tieck, it is not clear whether the poetry on Böhme that Novalis awaited was ever written;⁷³ their shared interest in the mystic reemerges, however, in Novalis's poem entitled *An Tieck*, in which the author makes wide use of the language typical of Böhme's mysticism.⁷⁴ Indeed, in a comment by Friedrich Schlegel we read: "Romantic poems of all kinds on and as from Jak.[ob] Böhme"⁷⁵ – where the qualification "on and as from" is particularly noteworthy and demonstrates as much the role played by Böhme as a source of inspiration for the Romantics, as the consonance between the poetic production of Romanticism and the parallel elaboration of Böhme's thought.

Hegel's criticism of the interpretation of mysticism provided by Tieck shows its point of strength in its attack on the theory according to which mysticism is said to be expressed naturally in the form of poetry, rather than in the articulated and logical process of conceptual development, as is written in Hegel's review. Baumgardt, the author of an important study on the relationship between Franz von Baader and the early Romantics, emphasizes the fact that the Romantic reception of Böhme's mysticism (considering in this case not only Tieck but also other members of the Jena circle) was centered on their admiration for that form of *Gedankenpoesie* – a complex blend of poetry and conceptual elaboration – which the Romantics thought

⁷⁰ Ederheimer (1904), 8 and 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8: "Die Mystik ist demnach von selbst in der Romantik begründet."

⁷² Tieck (1864), vol. 1, 306: "Auf Alles bin ich gespannt – besonders auch auf Dein Gedicht über Böhme." The letter is undated.

⁷³ In all probability, this is the same poem on Böhme promised for the review *Athenäum* edited by the Schlegel brothers, and to which Plitt refers (cf. Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 245).

⁷⁴ In this respect cf. Paulin (1985), 141. There is also a letter from A. W. Schlegel to Tieck (Tieck (1864), vol. 3, 250) which contains as a postscript: "Noch eins: Schreib an F. von Hardenberg über seine eingesandten Gedichte, oder schicke sie mir zurück, damit ich es thun kann. Besser wäre es aber, Du thätest es, da ich mich auf Jakob Böhme noch gar nicht verstehe" (letter 10, dated: Berlin, 28 May 1801). According to Ederheimer, Novalis's reception of Böhme's mysticism completed the work of elaboration begun by Tieck: only through Novalis would Böhme's mysticism in fact be finally appreciated for its links with Romantic *Poesie* (cf. Ederheimer (1904), 66). P. Mayer, on the other hand, moves in a completely opposite direction, tending to reduce the real effect of Böhme on Novalis and the significance of the latter's reading of the shoemaker's work (cf. Mayer (1999), 77 et seq.). Cf. also Bonheim (1996), 314–319.

⁷⁵ KFSa, vol. 16 (*Zur Poesie und Literatur II*), 305 (613): "Romantische Gedichte jeder Art über und aus Jak.[ob] Böhme."

they could detect in the work of Jakob Böhme the mystic, who revealed himself in this respect to be a true forerunner of the *Romantik*.⁷⁶ Tieck, in particular, found in Böhme's writings an example of that mixture of poetical expression and religious spirit through which to create a new philosophy inspired by mysticism.⁷⁷ for this reason the work of the German philosopher appeared as the very incarnation of the Romantic ideal, a point of encounter and conjunction between poetical inspiration, mystical depth and religious purpose.⁷⁸ The recurrence of the image of dawn in Romantic literature of this period, as Burath recalled, could also be justified by the desire to acknowledge and appreciate Böhme's writing from a literary and even stylistic point of view, highlighting the role that imagery and metaphor played in his writings, giving them a poetical character.

It has already been pointed out that Tieck abandoned and resumed his reading of *Theosophia Revelata* several times, alternating between periods of great exaltation and then of distance and reassessment, marked by the exercise of a faculty that was itself widely found in the approach and literary production of many Romantics and which is presented by Tieck himself as almost the counterpart of mystical enthusiasm, namely the faculty to *doubt*. Indeed, the very desire to explore the depths of mysticism inevitably carries with it the need for doubt.⁷⁹ The result of this movement between the two poles of excessive enthusiasm and of a more cool (*kühl*) and calculated tendency to doubt, produced that uncertain course, that syncopated rhythm between absolute devotion to Böhme's writings and sudden abandonment, which Hegel christened "Tieck's hypochondria".

In this way – moving between enthusiasm and uncertainty – Tieck confronts the discovery of an author still barely known in Jena at the time of the Schlegel group, but whose fame as an inspired and controversial mystic had certainly gone before

⁷⁶ Cf. Baumgardt (1927), 225.

⁷⁷ Cf. Paulin (1985), 99–100: "Tieck finds poetry and religion finely fused in the Spanish baroque drama of Calderón, but he finds an even more appealing fount of inspiration in the old German heresiarch Jacob Böhme. Böhme was, in Heinrich Jung-Stilling's later words, manna to the mystically-inclined religious." Note the comparison between Böhme and Calderón, demonstrating the fact that the Romantic reception of the mystic of Görlitz takes place entirely on the level of literary tradition, well before the philosophical tradition (in Tieck's view, in fact, Fichte and Schelling appeared *superficial* in relation to the depth of Böhme's mysticism). Pöggeler also insists on the Romantic conjunction of poetry, religion and mysticism, underlying in particular Hegel's distance from this position: "Tieck spricht also der Philosophie ein mystisches Bedürfnis zu und stellt sie neben Religion und Poesie – wie Hegel sagen könnte: in den Bereich des absoluten Geistes. Aber Tieck will dieser Mystik nicht die Form des Denkens geben" (cf. Pöggeler (1999), 211). Lastly, on Jung-Stilling as reader of Böhme, see Mayer (1999), 44.

⁷⁸ Cf. Sánchez de Murillo (1986), 191: "Jacob Böhme wurde in der Romantik als ein Ereignis gefeiert. Der Philosophus Teutonicus erschien als Inkarnation des romantischen Wissenschaftsideal, das in der alles liebenden Liebe, nicht im sich wissenden Wissen, Sinn und Ziel der Geschichte sieht."

⁷⁹ Cf. for example Eichendorff (1970–1988), vol. 3, 800, where Eichendorff quotes Tieck: "Bei meiner Lust am Neuen, Seltsamen, Tiefsinnigen, Mystischen lag auch stets in meiner Seele eine Lust am Zweifel und der kühlen Gewöhnlichkeit und ein Ekel meines Herzens, mich freiwillig berauschen zu lassen."

him. On the other hand, Tieck's admission about his problematic relationship with Böhme's mysticism offers the possibility of establishing a link with Friedrich Schlegel, another important Romantic reader of Böhme. The conscious movement between the two extremes of enthusiasm and doubt did in fact, according to Schlegel, constitute a characteristic feature of the ironic attitude.⁸⁰ Eichendorff speaks in this respect of a *Doppelnatur*, meaning a perpetual oscillation, or suspension, between mysticism and doubt, between enthusiasm and ironic distance; this double nature is not only that of Tieck, but is also a part of Schlegel's attitude.⁸¹ One could indeed regard this concept – in Eichendorff's terms – as the key element through which to provide an interpretation of the Romantic rediscovery of the mystics, and of Böhme in particular: from Tieck, to Schlegel, to Novalis, right up to Solger, the relationship between the *Frühromantik* and mysticism appears marked by this inner duplicity. The same Romantic reception of Böhme, which starts with Tieck's enthusiastic presentations at the Schlegel circle, then passes through alternate phases, including the loss of interest by its first promoter, and continues in a far from linear manner, so that the Romantics will never manage to free themselves from this double-edged relationship with the study of Böhme's writings, thus remaining caught up at the level of veneration, of enthusiasm for the Görlitz cobbler, or in an entirely opposite attitude.⁸²

From Solger's writings, published by his friend Tieck after his early death, Hegel extracts a significant phrase regarding the Romantic conception of mysticism: "mysticism [*Mystik*] is the mother of irony when it looks to reality; when it looks to the eternal world it is the child of enthusiasm or inspiration."⁸³ The very concept of *mysticism* elaborated by the first Romantics shows within it a *Doppelnatur*. Following Solger's reasoning we can deduce that the attitude of the Romantics toward mysticism was determined in the last analysis by the two-fold nature of the same object under investigation: mysticism in fact appeared to the Romantics as a hybrid path, tending toward the heights of divine inspiration, and at the same time

⁸⁰ The attention directed by Schlegel to the philosophical role of irony, considered as a fundamental role of *Frühromantik*, gained him the name of "Vater der Ironie" (*Werke* 16, 465; cf. TWA 11, 233). On the points of contact and difference between the way in which Schlegel, Tieck and Solger understand the concept of irony, see TWA 11, 257. In particular, on the concept of *Ironie* in Schlegel, see Behler (1997), ch. 4: *Friedrich Schlegels Theorie der Ironie*. On Tieck's changing attitude see also a comment by Kierkegaard in *Über den Begriff der Ironie*, quoted by Vieweg (2007), 107.

⁸¹ Cf. Eichendorff (1970–1988), vol. 3, 800–801: "Als er [*Tieck*] nun aber so leicht und willkürlich in die Intentionen der Romantik eingegangen, mußte jene Doppelnatur, jene kühle Lust am Tiefsinnigen und am Gewöhnlichen, an der Mystik und am Zweifel notwendig mit der von Novalis und Friedrich Schlegel gar ernst gemeinten Romantik selbst in immer bedenklicheren Zwiespalt geraten und, weil sie eben nur Lust war, endlich in jene feine Ironie umschlagen, die uns überall absichtlich herausfühlen läßt, daß der Autor an alles das, womit er so geistreich spielt, eigentlich doch selber nicht glaube."

⁸² Cf. Baumgardt (1927), 225.

⁸³ *Werke* 16, 489 (cf. TWA 11, 257): "Die *Mystik* [...] ist, wenn sie nach der *Wirklichkeit* hinschaut, die Mutter der *Ironie*, wenn nach der *ewigen Welt*, das Kind der Begeisterung oder Inspiration." Hegel quotes from: Solger (1826), vol. 1, 689.

intimately bound to the dimension of doubt, of irony (even wit, *Witz*), remaining suspended in this way between two apparently irreconcilable opposites.⁸⁴

In this respect, both Tieck's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism as well as that advanced by Schlegel form part of a broader picture, since both move on a common and shared terrain, which is Romanticism's encounter with the problem of the mystical phenomenon and the discussion as to its significance. Beyond this general consideration, there were further points of contact between Tieck's interpretation and that of Schlegel, especially insofar as the natural connection between mysticism and poetry (and therefore the role of the mystic as poet). An examination of certain significant comments provided by Schlegel on Böhme's mystical philosophy will make it possible to focus more precisely on the characteristics and the complex evolution of Böhme's reception by the Romantics of Jena.

1.2.2 Böhme's *Poesie* According to Friedrich Schlegel

As Paola Mayer has rightly pointed out, F. Schlegel is the only early Jena Romantic in relation to whom we can be sure without any shadow of doubt that his interest in Böhme's work was also translated into careful and lengthy study: there is evidence of this in the abundance of notes and comments on Böhme's mysticism – including observations directly relating to the interpretation of his writings – as well as praise for Böhme in his literature and philosophy lectures of 1805.⁸⁵ Schlegel's interpretation, in its fundamental approach, retains some of the main characteristics of Tieck's interpretation, but is presented at the same time in a more complex and detailed manner, so that Böhme assumes an increasingly central role in the course of Schlegel's reflection – we therefore witness an evolution in his interpretation and not just a wavering interest, as in the case of Tieck.

Böhme's name appears for the first time in the letter mentioned above, addressed to Novalis, in which Schlegel tells his friend of the great interest that Tieck was devoting at that time to Böhme's work.⁸⁶ Schlegel himself began in all probability to

⁸⁴ The same wit is characterized by Schlegel as *divine* (see for example the following fragment from *Ideen* (1800), in KFSa, vol. 2, 258: "[26] Witz ist die Erscheinung, der äußere Blitz der Fantasie. Daher seine Göttlichkeit, und das Witzähnliche der Mystik."

⁸⁵ Mayer (1999), 114 and 129. Mayer notes in particular that the absence of relevant comments on Böhme in Novalis's writings lead to a drastic reassessment of the theory that Böhme's mysticism had a decisive effect on the evolution of von Hardenberg's philosophical and literary ideas. In this sense the famous statement by Novalis himself in a letter to Tieck ("Jakob Boehme lese ich jetzt im Zusammenhange und fange an, ihn zu verstehen, wie er verstanden werden muss", in Tieck (1864), vol. 1, 305 et seq.) – which Ederheimer emphasizes, according to which Novalis is said to be the Romantic reader *par excellence* of the shoemaker's writings (cf. Ederheimer (1904), 57 et seq.) – is not substantiated, for example, in a series of reading notes, which provide fundamental evidence in the case of Schlegel. Hellerich (1995), 89–91, briefly discusses the theory, already advanced by J. Neubauer, of a direct effect of the reading of Böhme on one of Novalis's *Geistliche Lieder*.

⁸⁶ Cf. Mayer (1999), 115. On the textual evidence regarding Schlegel's first contacts with Böhme's mysticism, the picture outlined by Cuniberto (1991), 77 is particularly clear.

take an interest in Böhme in the wake of Tieck's "great love" for Böhme's mysticism: according to Behler, the discussions (already referred to) at the house of the Schlegels on the mystic's work rediscovered by Tieck had a direct influence on the thought of F. Schlegel, particularly insofar as it relates to the progressive importance attributed to symbolology⁸⁷ and to the observation of nature in philosophical speculation.⁸⁸ From the beginning, Schlegel therefore brings the themes of Böhme's mysticism presented by Tieck into his own personal horizon of research, in such a way that Böhme's contribution in the last analysis seems far from marginal in relation to the development of certain fundamental motifs in Schlegel's thought: indeed, *Theosophia Revelata* is an active presence on the philosophical path it takes from the years 1799–1800. Above all, the progressive increase in interest for Böhme seems to run parallel to the development of a new concept of *Mystizismus* on the part of Schlegel.⁸⁹ The interpretation of Böhme plays a fundamental role in the context of a broader speculation around the characteristics and significance of the mystical phenomenon, above all regarding the interconnection between mysticism and poetry – a theme that inevitably recalls Tieck's interpretation. But unlike Tieck, for whom mysticism cannot be distinguished in reality from a generic aesthetic approach, Schlegel undertakes a process of philosophical re-elaboration of the significance of mysticism, with the aim of revealing its speculative depth.⁹⁰ In this context, Böhme's contribution to Schlegel's study on *Mystizismus* appears complex, multi-faceted and one might say all-pervading: Böhme's mysticism is repeatedly cited as an example of that particularly delicate and unusual encounter between poetry, philosophical profoundness and careful use of language (later we shall see how these aspects are linked together), from which Romantic literature ought to gain inspiration. The rediscovery of Böhme and interest in the history of mysticism in general, which, as we have seen, are recurring themes in the output of the early Romantics,⁹¹ are intermingled in Schlegel's case with original philosophical elements thanks to which his interpretation of Jakob Böhme's mysticism seems particularly interesting. Starting off from the ideas put forward by Tieck, Schlegel is the first of the Jena Romantics to elaborate a philosophical conception of Böhme's mysticism, based on the following key points: the importance of mysticism for the

⁸⁷ The concept of *mysticism* itself is interpreted by Schlegel in a particular phase of his reflection as a form of *symbolism* (cf. Behler (1966), 77).

⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁹ As for the evolution of the concept of mysticism in Schlegel's thought, see *ibid.* In particular in the years around the publication of *Athenäum*, Schlegel had interpreted mysticism in terms of a "poetische[r] Symbolismus" (cf. *ibid.*). In *Athenäum* Schlegel published a fragment containing the following 'definition' of *mysticism*: "[398] Der Mystizismus ist die mäßigste und wohlfeilste aller philosophischen Rasereien. Man darf ihm nur einen einzigen absoluten Widerspruch kreditieren, er weiß alle Bedürfnisse damit zu bestreiten und kann noch großen Luxus treiben" (KFSA, vol. 2, 240).

⁹⁰ Cf. Behler (1992), 265–266. Behler emphasizes the fact that Schlegel and Novalis used to define their own intellectual attitude as *mystical*.

⁹¹ According to E. Ederheimer the rediscovery of mysticism was an essential factor in the very definition of the intellectual and literary orientation of the *Romantik*: Ederheimer (1904), 8.

elaboration of a philosophical language (and the German language in particular); the concept of *Poesie* and its relationship with mysticism, and the relationship between mysticism and *Naturphilosophie* (from which point of view Böhme is emblematic).

We should recall Schlegel's fragment, mentioned above, referring to Böhme's presence (almost omnipresence) in the literary, and in particular poetical production of Romanticism.⁹² It is a passing comment, but at the same time fundamental for our study: Schlegel in fact vouches for the broad penetration of Böhme within the *Romantik* movement, for which the mystical cobbler is a source of inspiration and, at the same time, of admiration – poems are composed that draw on Böhme's mysticism or present it directly as their theme. The reasons for this intimate resonance must be sought, according to Schlegel, as much in the natural link between Romantic *Poesie* and the very spirit of mysticism,⁹³ as in the characteristics of that particular mysticism expressed in the work of Jakob Böhme, a mysticism unique of its kind. Böhme's mysticism is in fact a form of poetry, and Böhme is included for this reason within the German-language poetical tradition.⁹⁴ In other places Schlegel compares Böhme's work to that of other great poets (Milton and Dante, for example) with which, in his view, it shares not only the depth and fantastic wealth of poetical vision, but also a refinement of expression.⁹⁵ Elsewhere, *Theosophia Revelata* is likened to the writings of Shakespeare, so that the shoemaker of Görlitz is presented almost as the German equivalent of the English bard. For example, in the eleventh of his lessons on the *History of the Old and New Literature*, Böhme is presented as a prototype and incarnation of the *Genie* – a key concept of the *Romantik* and a fundamental theme in Schlegel's thought.⁹⁶ The creative capacity of the man of genius is expressed first of all in the "gift of language", and it is from this point of view that Shakespeare and Böhme can be compared to each other. Shakespeare in fact drew inspiration from the *Volkspoesie*, from the popular poetical tradition, and

⁹² KFSa, vol. 16 (*Zur Poesie und Literatur II*), 305 (613).

⁹³ In this respect, see for example the following fragment: "Das Romantische für π[Poesie], was d[as] Absolute für Myst[ik], das Primitive für φσ[Philosophie]" (ibid., 262 [102]).

⁹⁴ Cf. ibid., 333 (936): "Die dritte Epoche d[er] deutschen π[Poesie] (I) burgund[isch] 2) schwäb. [isch]) ist Jak.[ob] Böhme."

⁹⁵ KFSa, vol. 6 (*Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur, Fünfzehnte Vorlesung*), 364–365.

⁹⁶ Cf. ibid., 255: "Sehen wir auch auf den erfinderischen Geist und die Gabe der Sprache, und vergleichen wir die Philosophie mit der Dichtkunst, so ist auch in dieser Hinsicht das Genie kein ausschließendes Vorrecht der Gelehrten. Konnte ein Shakespeare, der sich doch ganz an die Volkspoesie angeschlossen, eine Höhe und Tiefe der Darstellung erreichen, in welcher den kunstreichsten Nachdenkens, und jener höhern und geheimen Philosophie erschöpfen konnte, welche damals aus dem Kreise der Wort- und Schriftgelehrten verstoßen war. Dies findet seine volle Anwendung auf jenen Mann, dessen Name schon den Aufgeklärten ein Ärgernis und den Gebildeten eine Torheit ist; den sogenannten teutonischen Philosophen, Jakob Böhme, der zu seiner Zeit nicht bloß in Deutschland, sondern auch in andern Ländern, in Holland und in England viele eifrige Anhänger hatte, zu denen auch jener, durch sein Unglück so berühmte König Karl von England gehörte." The concept of *Genie* recurs repeatedly in the Athenäums-Fragmente (see, for example, no. 119, in KFSa, vol. 2, 184: "Genie kann man eigentlich nie haben, nur sein. Auch gibt es keinen Pluralis von Genie, der hier schon im Singularis steckt. Genie ist nemlich ein System von Talenten").

it is on this – not on the language and theories of experts (“Wort- und Schriftgelehrten”) – that his masterpieces are founded, in a perfect fusion between philosophical depth of representation and the form of expression used.⁹⁷ In the same way, the shoemaker Jakob Böhme, someone as distant as ever from the world of educated professors (those whom he himself called “Mr Know-alls”)⁹⁸ managed nevertheless to create a philosophical language for his writings, and in this respect he is a prime example of the absolute lack of education and schooling – something that has always and inevitably irritated scholars. In Jakob Böhme, Schlegel adds, the disparity between his extraordinary creative capacity and his remoteness from the education and language that characterizes the *Gelehrte* emerges even more clearly than in the case of Shakespeare, and therefore the “gift of language” appears even more apparent to anyone reading *Theosophia Revelata*.

It is notable how Schlegel follows here the interpretative tradition of Franckenberg: he returns once more to the theme of Böhme's exceptional abilities and the striking contrast between the greatness of the author's work and his humble origins. But in this context, the bold parallel between Shakespeare and Böhme and the latter's inclusion within the classical tradition of German poetry – in which he represents one specific stage of development, the third – constitute two new elements in Schlegel's interpretation.

In another part of the same cycle of lessons, emphasis is given to popular writers, *Volksschriftsteller*. The description of Böhme as *Volksschriftsteller* adds another important detail in understanding the role he played in Schlegel's history of literature and, above all, the importance and significance of a rediscovery of Böhme's writings for early nineteenth-century readers. Schlegel interprets this word in a particularly flexible manner, and is thus able to cover different aspects and disciplines, spanning religion, poetry and philosophy: from this point of view, examples of *Volksschriftsteller* include Luther, Böhme and Hans Sachs, the famous *Meistersänger* of Nuremberg.⁹⁹ In this picture, Böhme once again occupies a boundary position, given that his work is at the same time philosophical, religious and poetical.¹⁰⁰ But what characterizes the *Volksschriftsteller* more exactly – beyond his link with the *people*, which can be the author's social class of origin as much as the person to whom the literary work in question is addressed (in this sense the word *Volksschriftsteller*

⁹⁷ For a short presentation of Schlegel's interpretation of Shakespeare's works, see Behler (1966), 39–41.

⁹⁸ Cf. AuN, 41.

⁹⁹ Cf. KFSA, vol. 6, 363: “Nicht bloß die Religion war wie in Luthers und andrer Werken im protestantischen Deutschlande Gegenstand und Angelegenheit der Volksschriftsteller, sondern auch die Dichtkunst fiel vorzüglich ihnen anheim, ja sogar die Philosophie. Ich erwähne hier nur als die merkwürdigsten, den bekannten Meistersänger von Nürnberg, und dann jenen zur Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges unter den Namen des teutonischen Philosophen in den protestantischen Ländern und dem übrigen «nördlichen» Europa berühmten christlichen Naturdenker und Seher.”

¹⁰⁰ Schlegel's theory on the mutual relationship between poetry, philosophy and religion should clearly be considered in this context; see in particular *Ideen* (see, for example, no. 46: “Poesie und Philosophie sind, je nachdem man es nimmt, verschiedene Sphären, verschiedene Formen, oder auch die Faktoren der Religion.” KFSA, vol. 2, 260–261).

has two aspects) – is his role as innovator of language. The *Volksschriftsteller* possesses an “erfinderischen Geist”, a spirit of discovery.¹⁰¹ Luther's contribution in the evolution of the German language through his translation of the Bible can thus be seen along the same lines as Böhme's attempt to create a philosophical terminology in German.¹⁰² Böhme's enormous merit in the field of language makes it possible almost to make up for what appears lacking (lacking, above all, in clarity) in his philosophy, or that which is simply difficult to understand. From Schlegel's point of view, Böhme has full right to enter the history of the German language for the very wealth and expressive power of his language: surprisingly, the shoemaker of Görlitz appears first of all as one of the most perceptive and ingenious founders of the German (philosophical) language – even though, as we shall see, his role in the history of German culture is not limited, according to Schlegel, to the sphere of language.¹⁰³

The importance of salvaging Böhme and his writings has a key function in this respect. Schlegel complains, in fact, about the gradual weakening of the German language during the years when he is writing these lessons, due mainly to the lack of real innovation and a tendency to imitate linguistic forms imported from foreign languages. Böhme's writing, on the other hand, offers eloquent proof of the height of expressive intensity the German language can reach. Böhme for this reason, along with Luther, becomes one of the great founders and innovators of German culture and language. In *Ideen* Böhme is named among the “old heroes of German art and science”:¹⁰⁴ in Schlegel's view he therefore represents one of the main sources of German culture, to be looked upon as a point of reference. The comparison with Hans Sachs is particularly interesting: not only are there two shoemakers among the founding fathers, but some of the characteristic features of the figure and writing style of Böhme – his depth of speculation (*Tiefsinn*) combined with his simplicity, humility and almost *gaucheness* of literary expression – are interpreted

¹⁰¹ With regard to Luther as a *Volksschriftsteller* see also KFSa, vol. 6, 363: “Luther war durchaus ein Volksschriftsteller. So merkwürdige, umfassende, vielwirkende, durch Geisteskraft außerordentliche Volksschriftsteller hat kein anderes Land, in dem neuern Europa gehabt, als Deutschland.”

¹⁰² The parallel between Luther and Böhme with regard to the creation of a new terminology, firstly in the field of religion, and secondly in the field of philosophy, would also be pursued by Hegel, according to whom, in the same way that Luther gave the Bible a voice in German, Böhme gave philosophy a voice in German. On this we shall return later (cf. below, Sect. 3.3.1.2).

¹⁰³ Cf. KFSa, vol. 6, 365: “Was man ‘indessen’ auch in Rücksicht auf Philosophie Mangelhaftes und Irriges ‘oder vielleicht nur Unverständliches’ in den Lehren des Jakob Böhme zu bemerken glaubt, die Geschichte der deutschen Sprache darf ihn nicht mit Stillschweigen übergehen, denn in wenigen Schriftstellern hat sich noch zu jener Zeit der ganze Reichtum derselben so offenbart, wie in diesem; eine bildsame Kraft, und aus der Quelle strömende Fülle, welche sich zur Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges zuletzt in dem Maße kund gibt, und welche die Sprache in der jetzigen Zeit künstlicher Ausbildung, äußerer Abglättung und Nachbildung fremder Kunst- und Sprachgestalten nicht mehr besitzt.”

¹⁰⁴ KFSa, vol. 2, 268 (*Ideen*, no. 120): “Der Geist unsrer alten Helden deutscher Kunst und Wissenschaft muß der unsrige bleiben so lange wir Deutsche bleiben. Der deutsche Künstler hat keinen Charakter oder den eines Albrecht Dürer, Kepler, Hans Sachs, eines Luther und Jakob Böhme. Rechtlich, treuherzig, gründlich, genau und tiefsinnig ist dieser Charakter, dabei unschuldig und etwas ungeschickt.”

by Schlegel as distinctive elements of German culture in general. In this sense, Böhme is regarded as no less than a milestone in German culture.

Just like the two shoemakers Sachs and Böhme – old forgotten heroes – the very concept of *mysticism*, frequently used to describe their cognitive approach, itself fell into disuse: the memory of its true meaning, Schlegel claims, is now lost. The rediscovery of Böhme must therefore be considered in the context of a more general discussion around the meaning of *mysticism*, and above all its current relevance for Romantic readers.¹⁰⁵ In this respect, in a short piece published in the review *Athenäum*, Schlegel criticizes the position of those who regard mysticism as a general “sentimental speculation lacking in subject”, since on the contrary “this fine ancient word” indicates nothing other than “the absolute philosophy”, the philosophical path that leads to the essence of the mysteries.¹⁰⁶ The *ancient* and deep meaning of the word *Mystik* is therefore implicitly contrasted with a *new* and inexact meaning.¹⁰⁷ So far as the nature of the mystery (“Geheimnis und Wunder”, says Schlegel) that constitutes the essence of the mystical approach and viewpoint, Schlegel writes that “secret and mystery is all that can be grasped only through enthusiasm and with a philosophical poetical or ethical sense.”¹⁰⁸ The word *Mystik* is not directly used on this occasion but, instead, the term *enthusiasm* (*Enthusiasmus*) is introduced, whose importance in reconstructing Böhme's influence in Romanticism has already been mentioned. It can therefore be seen that there exists for Schlegel, as there was already for Tieck, a direct connection between enthusiasm and poetical spirit; but for Schlegel the picture is a great deal more complex. So far as we are concerned, there are two important points to clarify: the link between philosophy and poetry, and the concept of *Poesie*.

It has already been pointed out that the poetical qualities of Böhme's work make up in some way for the lack of philosophical discussion; on the other hand, Schlegel recognizes the hybrid and extremely malleable character of Böhme's approach, straddling philosophy, poetry and religious purpose. Enthusiasm, linked to the concept of *imagination* and a distinctive aspect of mysticism, appears in this context as a decisive factor. Schlegel also took part in the debate over the concept of *Schwärmerei* and on the characterization of Böhme as a *Schwärmer* – a theme that, as already pointed out, livened up several of the meetings of the Jena Romantics and led to the direct confrontation between Tieck and Fichte. Before taking a closer look

¹⁰⁵ Ederheimer (1904), 8, interprets the rediscovery of mysticism by the Romantics as a return to their own cultural origins, and in this sense speaks of “urdeutscher Mystizismus”.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. KFSa, vol. 2, 184 (*Athenäums-Fragmente*, no. 121): “Nichts ist kläglicher und verächtlicher als diese sentimentale Spekulation ohne Objekt. Nur sollte man das nicht Mystik nennen, da dies schöne alte Wort für die absolute Philosophie, auf deren Standpunkte der Geist alles als Geheimnis und Wunder betrachtet, was er aus andern Gesichtspunkten theoretisch und praktisch natürlich findet, so brauchbar und unentbehrlich ist.”

¹⁰⁷ A very similar reasoning is used in the *Zusatz* to Paragraph 82 of Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, which will be examined later in detail (cf. below, Chap. 2, Sect. 3.1).

¹⁰⁸ KFSa, vol. 2, 249 (*Athenäums-Fragmente*, no. 428): “Geheimnis und Myserie ist alles was nur durch Enthusiasmus und mit philosophischem poetischem oder sittlichem Sinn aufgefaßt werden kann.”

at the meaning of mystical *Schwärmerei* and examining its relationship with the problem of expressing philosophical matter in poetic form, it is necessary to further clarify Schlegel's concept of *Poesie*, which plays a key role in the interpretation of Böhme's mysticism.

Firstly, *Poesie* is not simply the same as the art of writing in a poetical manner, of *Dichtkunst*: unlike the latter, *Poesie* transcends the limits of individual arts (*Künste*) and individual literary genres,¹⁰⁹ and appears in the last analysis as an approach to understanding, in which philosophy plays an essential part.¹¹⁰ In this sense *Poesie* can be redefined as "the highest of all arts and sciences", and Schlegel identifies various expressions of it in his history of philosophy. Once again he gives Jakob Böhme the mystic a role that is far from secondary: Böhme's theosophy, like Plato's dialectics, is a science in the fullest and most exact sense of the word, since it is concerned "with that which only and truly is real"; from this point of view it constitutes a form of *Poesie*.¹¹¹ Böhme's work is therefore used as a model for Schlegel's ideal union between poetry and philosophy, between *Kunst* and *Wissenschaft*: Böhme appears from this point of view as a precursor of the Romantics, his *Theosophia Revelata* as an example of a poetical text – in other words, of a text in which *Poesie* itself is at work.

If we return now to the point where we began, namely the comparison between Tieck's understanding of Böhme as a *poet*, and that of Schlegel, it is clear that the word *poet* has a different and more complex connotation in Schlegel, since it is not intended to refer only to the style of writing – from richness of metaphor to refinement of expression – but also to the way in which the philosophical content is transmitted. Schlegel therefore regards Böhme as a *poet* in the new sense he gives to the word. The innovation brought by Böhme in the field of language is therefore combined with the *poetic* capacity to express what "is truly real", so that *Theosophia Revelata* assumes a high value from the *scientific* point of view.

This double aspect of Böhme's *poetry* is the subject of another passage in the abovementioned lessons on the *History of the Old and New Literature*, in which he considers the concepts of *Schwärmerei* and *Fantasie*.¹¹² "Böhme is called an

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Vigus (2009a), which refers to a comment by S. T. Coleridge, in which the author regrets that the English language has no equivalent for the German word *Poesie*, so that the substantial difference between *Poesie* and *Dichtkunst* cannot be adequately expressed.

¹¹⁰ On the need to reconcile and go beyond the opposition between *Kunst* and *Wissenschaft*, see KFSa, vol. 2 (*Lyceum-Fragmente*, no. 115), 161: "Alle Kunst soll Wissenschaft, und alle Wissenschaft soll Kunst werden; Poesie und Philosophie sollen vereinigt sein."

¹¹¹ Cf. KFSa, vol. 3 (*Aufsätze in der Europa*), 7: "Die Poesie also betrachten wir als die erste und höchste aller Künste und Wissenschaften; denn auch *Wissenschaft* ist sie, im vollsten Sinn dieselbe, welche Plato Dialektik, Jakob Böhme aber Theosophie nannte, die Wissenschaft von dem, was allein und wahrhaft wirklich ist." On *Poesie* as an integral part of the program of *Romantik* see KFSa, vol. 2, 182 (116).

¹¹² KFSa, vol. 6, 364–365: "Man nennt Jakob Böhme einen Schwärmer. Wenn es aber auch gegründet sein sollte, daß die Fantasie einen bei weitem größern Anteil an den Hervorbringungen seines Geistes hatte, als ein wissenschaftlich geübter Verstand; so muß man wenigstens gestehen, daß es eine sehr reich begabte und hoch erleuchtete Fantasie war, die wir in diesem sonderbaren Geiste gewahr werden. Wollte man ihn desfalls bloß als einen Dichter betrachten und mit andern

enthusiast [*Schwärmer*]”, declares Schlegel: the generic nature of the expression is an eloquent reference to the widespread debate on the notion of mystical enthusiasm in the early 1800s and to Böhme's central place in it. On the other hand, it is clear that the word *Schwärmer* was used in a negative sense (in the same way as it was used by Plitt to refer to Tieck), so that therefore to describe Böhme in this way was the same as expressing a negative view of his thought, considered as the manifestation of an immoderate enthusiasm and not a philosophical way of proceeding. Against this historical background Schlegel adds on his own personal interpretation of the poetical character of Böhme's mysticism. Firstly, what determines the *Schwärmerei* of Böhme is the absolutely central role of *imagination* in his work, to the expense of “intellect exercised scientifically”, which seems to pass into the background or even completely disappear. But if this were so, continues Schlegel, it still has to be acknowledged that Böhme had an “extremely illuminated imagination”, a true *gift*. The particular *Fantasie* possessed by “this extraordinary spirit” must therefore not be confused with a general tendency to swerve away from the tracks of reason and strike out into the realms of an unregulated confusion. Böhme's theosophy represents, for Schlegel, a form of *Poesie*, and *Poesie* is a *science* (*Wissenschaft*), indeed the noblest of all sciences.

To the accusation of lack of scientific rationality directed toward Böhme's mysticism, Schlegel then replies by elaborating a new criterion of “scientificity”, according to which the cobbler cannot be described as a *Schwärmer* in the sense in which the word was generally used at the time. On the contrary, Böhme's work reveals a depth of imagination worthy of the great poets; and yet Schlegel lets it be understood that it is not right either to consider Böhme as “simply a poet”: as for the expressive beauty of *Theosophia Revelata*, it is equal – at least in certain expressions, in certain pages – to the style of Dante, Milton or Klopstock; but Böhme's “depth (*Tiefe*) of feeling”, his richness of imagination, are a distinctive feature of his work, thanks to which Böhme “almost surpasses” the model of the great poets referred to. Not only can Böhme therefore be rightfully included in the tradition of the finest poetry of Christian spirit, but the depth of his mystical intuition (conceived as the mirror opposite of the enthusiastic superficiality of those who accuse him of it) raises him to a higher level than even that of Dante and Milton: Böhme is in fact a poet in the sense that he interpreted *Poesie* scientifically in terms of theosophy.

It is important to emphasize that *Schwärmer*, in Schlegel's interpretation, plays an important role in the inflexibility in which official culture – represented by professional scholars – tends to be caught up. The superficiality of the “dead formulae” composed by men of letters represents in this case the mirror opposite of the vital profoundness of the enthusiastic philosophy of certain illiterates from among the

christlichen Dichtern, welche übersinnliche Gegenstände darzustellen versucht haben, mit Klopstock, Milton oder selbst mit Dante vergleichen, so wird man gestehen müssen, daß er sie an Fülle der Fantasie und Tiefe des Gefühls beinahe übertrifft, und selbst an einzelnen poetischen Schönheiten und in Rücksicht auf den oft sehr dichterischen Ausdruck ihnen nicht nachsteht.” Lüer (1997), 30, has commented on this passage placing the accent on the capacity that Schlegel attributes to Böhme to keep open the boundaries between philosophy, poetry (*Poesie*) and poetic art (*Dichtkunst*).

people. In the same way, the secrecy and fragmented manner in which the work of the *Schwärmer* had been passed down (the case of Böhme is exemplary from this point of view) is contrasted with the freedom of expression and fame that learned men at the top of the social ladder could enjoy.

In this context the task and the main characteristic of the *Schwärmer* seems to be that of preserving the original vitality of philosophy against the 'mortifying' attacks from the world of an official culture that has the appearance of being complex and philosophically profound but is in reality simply vacuous. The concept of *Schwärmerei* thus undergoes a notable twist of meaning, and one of the main features on which the model of the mystical cobbler, passed down from Franckenberg, is based (in which Böhme's ignorance is an integral part of his prophetic role) is re-elaborated within a new interpretative context. The mystic's excessive enthusiasm becomes an effective way of ensuring that the dynamism and energy of philosophy is maintained; Hegel himself would express a similar view with regard to medieval mysticism, which conserved and protected the purity of philosophy from certain shifts and inflexibilities of scholarly thought.¹¹³

To conclude and complete this brief investigation of Schlegel's interpretation of Böhme, one further important consideration should be made, which leads directly to the question to be considered in the next section, regarding the forms – two in particular – of reception of Böhme's mysticism between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. It has been said that from Schlegel's point of view the shoemaker of Görlitz must be considered, above all, for the *philosophical* depth of his work; on various occasions Schlegel also used the term *Naturphilosoph* in referring to the author of *Aurora* (the same definition is also applied to Hans Sachs, to whom Böhme has been repeatedly compared).¹¹⁴ *Naturphilosophie* represents a central element in Böhme's theosophy, perfectly integrated into his mystical thought, as Schlegel rightly recognizes. In his lectures on *History of the Old and New Literature* Böhme is described as "Naturdenker und Seher",¹¹⁵ to indicate the fact that nature plays a fundamental role within his mystical vision: the mystic, one might say, recognizes the essence of divine mysteries in nature and through nature. But apart from the obvious consideration that nature and mystical vision are closely bound together in Böhme's work, the word *Naturphilosoph* is also indissolubly linked to another context, namely the debate as to the possibilities of knowledge deriving from the emerging natural philosophy and in particular from the first experiments with artificial magnets in which Schlegel himself probably didn't remain extraneous.¹¹⁶ In this sense the rediscovery of Böhme was helped by the spread of interest in a specific aspect of early nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie*, namely so-called animal magnetism, a term that encapsulates a complex series of

¹¹³On the important function of medieval mysticism according to Hegel cf. below, Chap. 2, Sect. 3.2.1.

¹¹⁴See for example KFSa, vol. 6, 364: "Eben dies gilt auch [*as for H. Sachs*] von Jakob Böhme, jenem deutschen Naturphilosophen, der von den gewöhnlichen Literatoren meistens übel behandelt wird."

¹¹⁵KFSa, vol. 6, 363.

¹¹⁶Cf. Hellerich (1995), 89–90, in which it is stated that Schlegel's doctor in Vienna, Giovanni Malfatti, was involved in experiments on the therapeutic effects of magnetic phenomena.

theories and thus describes a broad area of research rather than one clear tendency. Animal magnetism constitutes an important channel for the reception of Böhme's thought between 1700 and 1800: involvement in experimentation on the therapeutic possibilities of magnets is a trail that leads directly from the first Romantic readers of Böhme (especially Schlegel) to two of his most famous interpreters, namely Schelling and Baader, both enthusiastic supporters of animal magnetism – and finally to Hegel, who would dedicate paragraphs 405 and 406 of his *Encyclopedia* to a detailed criticism of the same theories. Not only therefore is it possible to identify a whole group of readers of Böhme's writings who are occupied at the same time with theoretical and practical aspects of experiments on animal magnetism, but in certain cases the interest in Böhme seems to be tied up with a specific type of attitude in relation to *Naturphilosophie* and in particular to animal magnetism.

To understand the originality of Hegel's interpretation, to which the central part of this book will be devoted, it is necessary at this point to reconstruct the essential aspects of a further phase of research into the reception of Böhme's philosophy in Germany in the early years of the nineteenth century, which comes directly from the creation of the model of the mystical cobbler discussed in this section.

2 The Reception of Böhme's Philosophy Through the Theories of Animal Magnetism and Theosophy

2.1 *Naturphilosophie and Animal Magnetism: Nature's Dynamics and the Mystical Experience of Magnetic Sleep*

According to Friedrich Schlegel, Böhme played an essential role in the development of *Naturphilosophie*, which in his judgment was a strictly *Teutonic* discipline, in other words inextricably linked to the German historical and cultural context, and practically unknown beyond the borders of Germany of that period.¹¹⁷ From this point of view, Böhme's philosophy had prepared for (and at the same time had anticipated) the particular evolution in the study of natural phenomena that Schlegel could observe at Jena, for example in the laboratory of J. W. Ritter: following Schlegel's reasoning, it seems perfectly natural that the rediscovery of Jakob Böhme's writings between 1700 and 1800 had led to a reception of his thinking within the specific sphere of nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie*. In particular, as already mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, it is possible to identify a series of points of contact and comparisons between Böhme's philosophy and the

¹¹⁷ Cf. Mayer (1999), 127: "Böhme [...] is praised not merely as a great German and a key figure in one of the great ages of German literature, but as a representative of another discipline that Schlegel associates exclusively with Germany, *Naturphilosophie*: 'Natur $\varphi\sigma$ [philosophie] von jeher Deutsch – Böhme – Stahl, Keppeler. (Haller) Ist Helmont zu d[en] Deutschen zu rechnen?'" (Quote from: KFSa, vol. 18, 456).

theories of animal magnetism, which were developed and had a particular success in those years spanning the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was a period extremely relevant to the Romantic reception of Böhme's thought, but which has not been adequately considered from this point of view until now,¹¹⁸ and would have a clear influence on the reading of Böhme's writings by post-Romantic readers – as well as their reading by Hegel, though, in this last case, in an entirely distinctive manner.

The first point of connection between Böhme's philosophy and the elaboration of animal magnetism is geographical. The rediscovery of *Theosophia Revelata* began, as we have seen, from Jena, centre of the Romantic circle of the Schlegels, where there was a growing interest in the early years of the nineteenth century in animal magnetism and its therapeutic applications. J. W. Ritter, who was in contact with various members of the *Schlegel*,¹¹⁹ and who is noted in particular for important experiments on electrical phenomena, set out his theories in this respect in the *Manual for the use of friends of nature*.¹²⁰ It was at Jena that one of the first journals concerned exclusively with the discussion of this subject was printed, the *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus* edited by A. W. Nordhoff,¹²¹ which preceded the more famous periodical of the same name edited by D. G. Kieser, C. A. Eschenmayer and F. Nasse.¹²² Kieser himself, who was editor of the second *Archiv*, had been appointed as professor of medicine at the University of Jena in 1812 and up to 1824 (the year when he became a member of the Jena Faculty of Medicine) he was intensively involved in the study of animal magnetism.¹²³ C. W. Hufeland, one of the most influential and enthusiastic supporters of the theory of animal magnetism, also made wide use of mesmeric techniques at his surgery in Jena.¹²⁴ Lastly, it is particularly interesting to look at the index of the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, one of the most influential contemporary German-language journals dedicated to reviewing

¹¹⁸ The literature on the reception of Böhme's thought through nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie*, and above all through animal magnetism, is particularly sparse: there are a few references to this problem in Mayer (1999); the long essay by Ego (1991) makes only a few brief comments on this question (cf. 303); Hammoud (1994) names Böhme only in passing and does not regard the Romantic reception of Böhme's thought as an integral part of his study (see, for example, 112 and 131). Lastly Gauld (1995) in his extensive work *History of Hypnotism* dedicates a chapter to the interconnection between *Magnetism* and *Mysticism*, where he states that Böhme and Swedenborg had a clear influence on Oetinger and Saint-Martin, and therefore on scholars on animal magnetism; but no details are given in this respect (cf. 141 et seq., and in particular 144–145).

¹¹⁹ On J. W. Ritter and the circle of Romantics, see Richter (1988), in particular 30 et seq.

¹²⁰ Hammoud (1994), 90.

¹²¹ The first volume of the *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus* edited by A. W. Nordhoff was printed in Jena by the publisher Göpferdt in 1804.

¹²² The *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus* edited by C. A. Eschenmayer (et al.) was printed in twelve volumes between 1817 and 1824. The review *Sphinx*, printed from 1825, is a continuance of the purposes of the *Archiv*. For the publishing history of the *Archiv*, see Mewald (1961).

¹²³ Cf. Mewald (1961), 9–10 and 14.

¹²⁴ Cf. Hammoud (1994), 95: "Avant d'être appelé à diriger le grand hôpital de Berlin, 'la Charité', en 1801, Hufeland était en exercice à Iéna. Il n'est pas exclu qu'il entretenait des rapport avec les Romantiques."

new works of literature, published in Jena from 1785 to 1803:¹²⁵ during this period, as many as thirty publications on animal magnetism were reviewed.¹²⁶ It is clear therefore that the debate on animal magnetism must have been particularly lively in Jena at the time of the early Romantics, and that Schlegel's words on the importance of *Naturphilosophie* and Böhme's role as *Naturphilosoph* must be put into in such context.

At this point it ought to be explained what animal magnetism is, how it was understood and why, within the broad spectrum of theories covered by the term *Naturphilosophie*, it represented such an important channel for the reception of Böhme's philosophy.

The debate on animal magnetism started in Germany¹²⁷ in those very years straddling the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in other words in the crucial period when the Jena circle of Romantics rediscovered Böhme.¹²⁸ Franz Anton Mesmer, who is regarded as the founder of the theory (and practice) of animal magnetism, was born in 1734 at Iznang, in Germany. After a long period in Vienna, where he studied medicine at the university, he moved to Paris in 1778.¹²⁹ It is no surprise that the discussion around animal magnetism and its theoretical bases started in the French universities before it did in Germany. A glance at the index of the first volume of the *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus* of Jena provides a significant picture: most of the published contributions are in fact translated from French, demonstrating the fact that, in Germany of 1804, the literature on animal magnetism must still have been fairly scarce (the publisher of the *Archiv* points, moreover, to the almost pioneering nature of his work).¹³⁰

Magnets, according to Mesmer,¹³¹ if used with care and attention by a skilled *magnetizer*, would have a clear therapeutic effect on various pathological condi-

¹²⁵ From 1804 to 1849 the review was printed at Halle and no longer at Jena.

¹²⁶ See in particular the years 1787–1788.

¹²⁷ Animal magnetism had particular success in France and Germany, while it remained practically unknown in England, Holland and Italy. Kluge (1818), 53, points out a publication, however, in Italian: Litta, *Riflessioni sul magnetismo animale*, 1792.

¹²⁸ At the beginning of his study *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel*, published for the first time in 1811, Kluge declares that there had been widespread interest in it in Germany for around thirty years (cf. Kluge (1818), iii). In this respect, Schopenhauer states in an essay titled *Animalischer Magnetismus und Magie*: “Als im Jahre 1818 mein Hauptwerk erschien, hatte der animalische Magnetismus erst kürzlich seine Existenz erkämpft” (cf. Schopenhauer (1989), vol. 3, 423).

¹²⁹ For essential biographical data, cf. Florey (1988), 11–40, in particular 11–15. Iznang, Mesmer's birthplace, is in Germany territory but on the Swiss border. For this reason, some essays on animal magnetism (e.g. Kluge (1818), 21) consider Mesmer to be Swiss by birth.

¹³⁰ Nordhoff (1804), 1: “Die Herausgabe eines Archivs für den thierischen Magnetismus, wird keiner besonderen Rechtfertigung bedürfen. Die Sache liegt noch als eine besondere und isolierte Erscheinung vor uns, die abgeschiedene Behandlung derselben kann der empirischen Nachforschung nur vorthellhaft seyn, und für die Wissenschaft ist sie ohne Bedeutung.”

¹³¹ According to Benz (1970), 10, Mesmer in reality simply reworked the central ideas of a doctrine already outlined by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, which the latter had named “animal magnetism”.

tions.¹³² This effect is possible thanks to the existence of an “animal fluid” within the human body; the so-called *fluidum* can be encouraged through the application of magnets on the body itself. It was the view of Kluge, author of a treatise on animal magnetism that was particularly successful in Germany (and also studied by Goethe himself),¹³³ that Mesmer had developed this theory through a close study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts and authors, one of the main points of reference certainly being Paracelsus, with particular attention to the rehabilitation of the “ancient mystics”, whom Mesmer read with great care despite the contempt his contemporaries expressed toward these sources.¹³⁴ The very concept of *fluidum*, to be understood as “fluidum universale”,¹³⁵ a spiritual and bodily spirit at one and the same time, which pervades the entire universe, is based on the idea that macrocosm and microcosm are intimately linked, and that every action exercised on one will have an effect on the other, and vice versa. This theory is clearly derived from Paracelsus, was already used by Paracelsus himself as the basis of his medical practice,¹³⁶ and reinterpreted by Mesmer through the introduction of the magnet, which acts as a channel for the passage of the *fluidum* and therefore allows the magnetizer to influence the state of the body and at the same time the balance of the whole universe. According to Kluge's reconstruction, Mesmer's fluid acts mechanically, obeying precise though unknown laws, and on it depend the properties of matter and bodies. In organized bodies, this action is carried out through the nerves, and the existence of the fluid is revealed directly from the application of the magnets. For this reason, animal magnetism can be regarded as a life force that is transmitted constantly through the nervous system, and this characteristic distinguishes it from electrical and galvanic phenomena with which it is nevertheless related: these latter phenomena are in fact associated with a sudden, powerful shock or vibration of

It is probable that Mesmer had access to Kircher's work at the Jesuit College in Dillingen, where he studied between the age of sixteen and nineteen (see also Florey (1988), 13).

¹³² Cf. Fara (2003), 492: “Animal Magnetism, the therapeutic technique often called Mesmerism after its initiator, Franz Mesmer (1734–1815), has been the major discredited science to be treated sympathetically by recent historians.” The reasons for the *discredit* that P. Fara mentions in this article will be clarified below. On F. A. Mesmer and the foundations of animal magnetism, see also Benz (1977).

¹³³ Cf. Azzouni (2002), 218–227, where it is stated that Goethe carefully studied Kluge (1813) (cf. 219). Goethe also knew *Erläuterungen seiner Zusätze zu Stieglitz' Schrift über den animalischen Magnetismus* by C. W. Hufeland and owned various volumes of the *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus* published by C. A. Eschenmayer (et al.) (cf. *ibid.*).

¹³⁴ Cf. Kluge (1818), 21: “Von jeher dem Hange zum Ungewöhnlichen und Sonderbaren ergeben, war es eine Lieblingsbeschäftigung für ihn, die, als eine Frucht des Aberglaubens mit Verachtung behandelten alten Mystiker hervorzusuchen und sie mit aller Anstrengung zu studiren.” And 28: “Höchst wahrscheinlich kam Mesmer nicht ganz von selbst auf die Entdeckung des animalischen Magnetismus, sondern wurde erst bei seinen Magneturen durch Lektüre der ältern Schriftsteller des 16ten und 17ten Jahrhunderts, welche schon dieselben Ideen äusserten, darauf hingeletet.”

¹³⁵ On the concept of “fluidum universale”, see Bürke (1958), 162 et seq.

¹³⁶ On the way in which Paracelsus understood the relationship between micro- and macrocosm, see the numerous studies by M. L. Bianchi in this respect and, in particular, his introduction to Paracelsus (1995), xiv-xix.

energy, rather than a continuous flow.¹³⁷ The magnetizer is therefore said to use the magnet to direct and influence this current of energy.

As already stated, the purpose of magnetic treatment is therapeutic; in particular, it is considered beneficial for the treatment of cases of hysteria, and in all pathological states where the balance of the organism has to be re-established.¹³⁸ The theory of animal magnetism, according to Kluge, derives directly from the tradition of the ancient oracle and its transformations, from the thaumaturgical kings of the medieval world to the arrival of Paracelsus and Mesmer: the common link is represented by *sympathy* which, in all the cases mentioned, lies at the basis of the curing process.¹³⁹ The concept of sympathetic feeling, which refers directly to Paracelsus's *signatura*, namely the mysterious relationship between the invisible interior and visible exterior of things, is applied by Mesmer to the practice of magnetic treatment, in that the magnetizer and the magnetized form two poles in a *sympathetic* relationship, in which the first – namely the healthy element – can intervene on the state of the sick patient. The sympathy is translated in this way into the possibility of a remote action by the therapist on the sick person, which doesn't necessarily have to be exercised through the application of magnets on the body, because the *fluidum* can be stimulated simply by magnetizing through the therapist's "curative will".¹⁴⁰

It can be seen therefore that Mesmer's theory, from its very origins, occupies a borderline zone, as Kluge makes clear when he states that animal magnetism is none other than the re-elaboration of what the oracles represented in antiquity. On the one hand, in fact, Mesmerism is part of the eighteenth-century debate on the nature of magnetic phenomena and therefore seeks to appear as a theory that is, so to speak, scientifically based (Mesmer had indeed received scientific training at the University of Vienna); but on the other hand it has to be realized that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the bounds of the very concept of *science* are regarded as extremely malleable. Mesmer's therapeutic practice is therefore closely linked to the historic period in which it was elaborated, a creation at the boundary between science and magical charm – but according to some commentators, including Hegel, the boundary is rather more one between science and charlatanism! – in dialogue with the university world, from which Mesmer himself came, but at the

¹³⁷ Kluge (1818), 3–5.

¹³⁸ With regard to the treatment of hysteria, it is interesting to note that many studies on animal magnetism or literary re-workings of the subject (with relative iconography) mainly describe cases in which the magnetizer is male and the patient is female (cf. for example: Müller (1988), 73; Florey (1988), 31). For example the essay of Wienholt (1787) is mainly concerned with curing female nervous illnesses with the magnetic treatment (cf. 3).

¹³⁹ Cf. Kluge (1818), 18. All cases here relate to "sympathische Curen."

¹⁴⁰ In this respect, Kluge (1818), 228 et seq. distinguishes between *simple* magnetic treatment, if the action is on the sick person just through the intervention of the magnetizer without any instrument or auxiliary, and *compound* if magnets or magnetized substances are used, of which the most famous is magnetized water, administered to the patient during the course of the therapy. On the capacity of the curer to exercise a remote effect on the patient see *ibid.*, 230. See also *ibid.*, 205 with regard to the role of the "Wille des Magnetiseurs" (the willpower of the magnetizer) during the magnetic treatment.

same time in a relationship with the tradition of “wizards and witches”, as Kluge declares,¹⁴¹ of oracles and miracle workers. In this sense, the elaboration of a *corpus* of theories associated with animal magnetism (as we shall see, in fact, it was a variegated and disorderly *corpus*, open to a variety of interpretations) was a ‘borderline’ phenomenon also in terms of time: the literature on Mesmer and on his curative method began to spread in Germany during the closing years of the eighteenth century, quickly arousing a multitude of reactions precisely because of its hybrid and controversial nature.

To understand the link between animal magnetism and the writings of Jakob Böhme, it should first be emphasized that the theoretical basis of animal magnetism underwent notable changes in the transition from late eighteenth century France to early nineteenth-century Germany, starting from the terminology adopted for translating into German the themes of a debate that began in Paris. In France, the theory of animal magnetism remained closely linked to the figure of its first promoter, Franz Anton Mesmer, and was thus regarded as his own and almost individual creation rather than as a discovery in which the scientific community of the time could take part: it is therefore no surprise that magnetism became known in France as *mesmerism*, to emphasize the indissoluble link between the man and his therapeutic practice. The accusations of charlatanism leveled against Mesmer, a controversial character to the point of inspiring many novelists,¹⁴² and the doubts about his ultimate purpose – economic more than therapeutic? – were therefore already interpreted in Paris as direct attacks on the theory of animal magnetism and its claim to scientificity. For this reason, the reception of mesmerism in Germany began at first as a difficult emancipation from Mesmer and from the aura of suspicions surrounding his medical practices in Paris. This process of detachment and re-elaboration started off right away at linguistic level: in the first German-language publications on this question, there was a clear preference for the expression “animalischer Magnetismus” rather than the term *Mesmerismus*. The adjectives *tierisch* and *animalisch* were often used as synonyms, even though certain authors, including Kluge, openly preferred the Latinate adjective *animalisch* to the Germanic *tierisch*, since the first has a wider extension of meaning than the second, carrying with it a direct reference to the Latin concept of *anima*.¹⁴³

The reception of Mesmer's theory in Germany took the form of an attempt at ‘rehabilitation’, aimed at opening up the *cognitive*, as well as therapeutic possibilities derived from experimentation with magnets. The idea of a therapeutic practice based on the use of magnets certainly aroused immediate curiosity on the part of the German university world as soon as Mesmer's fame began to spread.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴² Cf. Müller (1988). Per Olov Enquist's novel *The Magnetist's Fifth Winter* is inspired by the life of Mesmer.

¹⁴³ Kluge (1818), ix-x.

¹⁴⁴ Interesting in this respect is Unzer (1775), 3: here he states that he asked Mesmer himself to send magnets prepared by him for curing various illnesses, so that he in turn could successfully

For many German students, including the publishers of the *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus*, Mesmer's theory was nevertheless only a starting point and not a point of arrival, in other words a theoretical base from which to carry out a deeper scientific study of that contentious, controversial but also particularly fertile terrain on the border between science and magic – or also, as we shall see shortly, *between science and mysticism*. In the preface to the very first volume of the *Archiv* of 1817 we read, in fact, that the purpose of the periodical will be to gather “materials for a future theory of animal magnetism”, to promote “a scientific elaboration more rigorous than has happened so far.”¹⁴⁵ We note, therefore, the stress towards a scientific construction aimed toward the future, as much as the desire to distinguish a rigorous scientific approach to the question of animal magnetism from interpretations and irrational shifts away from the territory of science. Many of the authors who contributed to volumes of the *Archiv* demonstrated a wish to share the line of the publishers: van Ghert, for example, to whose role in Hegel's reception of Böhme's writings we shall return later, published a long piece in the pages of the *Archiv* describing a magnetic treatment that he himself had carried out, in which he states that animal magnetism is not exactly the same as mesmerism, since animal magnetism in Germany is subject to careful examination, to critical study.¹⁴⁶ The main purpose of the *Archiv* is therefore to create a discussion about the possibilities and the limits of animal magnetism, above and beyond any suspicion of charlatanism and independently of the use made of it by Mesmer.

The debate on the *hybrid* nature of animal magnetism was not, however, carried out entirely through this urge for scientificity: in German there was also a lively discussion around the value of magnetic practice as a creation on the border between various territories and contexts, as part of a nineteenth-century systematic experimentation on magnetic and electrical phenomena, but at the same time open to ideas of a magical or mystical nature, and strongly influenced by an ancient and equally controversial form of *Naturphilosophie* well rooted in German culture, namely the doctrine of Paracelsus. This debate would echo on until the mid-1800s and – most importantly and not surprisingly – would involve some of Böhme's most influential readers: Baader, Schelling and Hegel.

As for the malleability that was typical of animal magnetism – a curative method but also a theoretical structure capable of leading toward a new knowledge and perception of the natural world – C. W. Hufeland, the author of many studies on the topic, states that animal magnetism was not only a *Heilkunst*, a curative art, but also, and above all, a way of making it possible to reveal the secrets of nature, from both a “physical and spiritual” point of view.¹⁴⁷ For this reason it represents nothing less,

practice magnetic therapy. This is important evidence regarding the first contact between Mesmer and German doctors.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *Plan und Ankündigung*, in Eschenmayer et al. (1817–1824), vol. 1, 5.

¹⁴⁶ Van Ghert (1818a), 3–118 (cf. in particular the *Vorrede*), and (1818b), 3–62.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Hufeland (1816), 3: “Der Magnetismus ist und bleibt eine der wichtigsten Erscheinungen der neuern Zeit, nicht blos für die Heilkunst, sondern für die ganze physischen und geistige Natur, für die Geschichte und das Leben der Menschheit.”

according to Hufeland, than one of the most important discoveries for the human race – and such a judgment reflects the climate of enthusiasm and anticipation that accompanied the discovery of animal magnetism in Germany.

In one piece conceived as a commentary on the text of another expert on animal magnetism, Stieglitz, C. W. Hufeland calls attention to the need to carefully examine all conjectures about the action and effects of magnetic practice, subjecting them to the closest scrutiny. The aim is that of purging the theory of animal magnetism of all conjectures not substantiated by the facts, and therefore of any suspicion of fraud or falsehood.¹⁴⁸ But C. W. Hufeland's essay aroused more controversy precisely for what was regarded as the meaning and nature of this 'purging' of Mesmer's theory – and it is in this context that the subject of mysticism burst upon the scene. Wolfart, for example, responded with a treatise provocatively titled: *Der Magnetismus gegen die Stieglitz-Hufelandische Schrift über den thierischen Magnetismus in seinem wahren Wert behauptet* (*The True Value of Magnetism Asserted Against the Work by Stieglitz and Hufeland on Animal Magnetism*). Wolfart's text was structured in a series of replies to the most frequent accusations: "wrong-headedness, obscurity, reticence, mysticism, ingratitude, financial greed, gross vanity, charlatanism")¹⁴⁹ aimed at the theoretical basis of animal magnetism, and the author's main intention was also to show how C. W. Hufeland and Stieglitz, with their desire to free mesmerism from the shadow of charlatanism, by letting it enter as of right into the realm of science, had in reality distorted its deepest meaning. To the *accusation* of mysticism (where the word is used in a clearly disparaging manner), Wolfart responds without going in any way into the meaning of the concept of mysticism, but explaining that the mysterious, and in this sense *mystical*, movement of hands carried out by the magnetizer during the magnetic treatment in reality represents only the external, though essential, action of the mesmeric therapy.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.: "Aber diese wichtige Angelegenheit steht noch immer auf dem Standpunkt der empirischen Forschung, und es ist noch viel zu früh, Resultate ziehen oder Hypothesen aufbauen zu wollen; – sondern *Kritik*, und zwar die strengste Kritik, ist uns vonnöthen, um aus der Menge der nun vorhandenen Erfahrungen und Beobachtungen das Faktisch-Wahre zu sichten und festzusetzen, und Täuschungen, Betrug und Hypothesen davon zu trennen."

¹⁴⁹ Wolfart (1816), 83: "Verkehrtheit, Dunkelheit, Zurückhaltung, Mysticismus, Undankbarkeit, Geldgierde, plumpe Eitelkeit, Charlatanismus." Wolfart himself arranged for the printing of Mesmer (1814).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Wolfart (1816), 84–88: "Antwort. [...] Wahrlich seine [*Mesmer's*] Schuld war es nicht, daß man ihn nicht verstand, daß man seine hohe Ansicht der großen Gemeinschaft und Gemeinthatigkeit in der Natur als Verkehrtheit, als Schwärmerei auslegte, und, wir sehen es mit Erstaunen, noch dafür hält. [...] Und *Mystizismus* nannte man, daß er nicht jedem Neugierigen sagte: wenn du die Hände so oder so, und so bewegt, so wirkst du. Er meinte jeder Zeit, das Handbewegen und überhaupt das sogenannte Magnetisieren, als der bloß äußerliche Ausdruck, wäre eben nicht das Wesentliche und ergebe sich schon in dem gefundenen, stets laut ausgesprochenen Grundgesetz der Wechsel-Wirkung. Eben weil er nicht Naturforschung und Heilkunde verdrängen und an ihre Stelle eine blinde, sinnlose, ja mechanische Empyrie setzen wollte, ein Bestreben, das allein sein Betragen von Anfang an leitete: darum immer eigentlich ward er verkannt und verkannt, verleumdet und verschrien."

In this respect Wolfart provides an interesting interpretation of the word *Schwärmerei*: in fact he suggests that the attempt by Mesmer to conceive the nature, and consequently the art, of curing in a dynamic and not purely mechanistic manner has been wrongly interpreted as a tendency toward mystical obscurantism and toward the excesses of the *Schwärmerei*.¹⁵¹ The theory of animal magnetism, far from being an obscure, mystical and anti-scientific territory, is therefore said to represent an antidote to the blind mechanization of nature, since, to return to C. W. Hufeland, the physical (*physisch*) aspect is never separate from the spiritual (*geistig*) aspect. In this sense C. W. Hufeland and Wolfart agree on the merit of animal magnetism as an alternative to a purely empirical conception of nature; but the point of disagreement regards the interpretation of an essential aspect of mesmeric theory, namely the so-called *magnetic sleep* ("magnetischer Schlaf"). The magnetizer's intervention on the patient (with or without the help of a magnet) is said in fact to cause the patient to enter a state resembling a *trance* or state between sleep and wakefulness obtained through hypnosis.

In the study, *Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus*, mentioned earlier, Kluge attempts to make a full classification of the phases into which the magnetic treatment is divided¹⁵² – a therapy, as Kluge remarks in the same way as C. W. Hufeland and Wolfart, that acts not merely on a *physical* ("blos physisch") level, but also on a *psychic* (*psychisch*) level. According to Kluge, the magnetized patient passes through six different states under the magnetic influence of the curer, of which the third is called "magnetic sleep" and introduces a substantial change in the way the sick person perceives his body. In magnetic sleep the sick person passes to the state of somnambulism (the fourth phase), which enables him to reach an immediate and overall intuition of his body through which he can diagnose not only his own sickness but also the state of health of those around him (the fifth phase). The last phase is the most relevant so far as the problem of the connection between natural philosophy and mysticism is concerned:¹⁵³ Kluge calls it the "level of general clarity" ("Grad der allgemeinen Klarheit") but it is often also described as the phase of *Hellsehen*, or to use the French term *clairvoyance*. Kluge claims that the *clairvoyant* is *inexplicably* able to read the thoughts and soul of his curer, with whom he

¹⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.* Kluge in his *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel* also lamented the fact that Mesmer's theory was alleged by many doctors of the time to be a form of *Schwärmerei* (cf. Kluge (1818), 28).

¹⁵² The attempt to carry out a classification of the action exercised through magnetic treatment, as well as the distinction between the various approaches within the study of animal magnetism, seems to intensify in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first phase of the reception of the theory of mesmerism in Germany, and therefore the first studies in German dedicated to the argument, is characterized by a certain insecurity and vagueness regarding the contents and practice of the discipline, as scholars themselves often complain.

¹⁵³ The six phases of the magnetic therapy process are, according to Kluge, the following: "Grad des Wachens", "Grad des Halbschlafes", "Grad des magnetischen Schlafes", "Grad des Somnambulismus", "Grad der Selbstanschauung", "Grad der allgemeinen Klarheit" (see the long section: *Erscheinungen bey dem Magnetisierten*, in Kluge (1818), 58 et seq., in particular 64–69).

establishes an extremely strong relationship of interdependence:¹⁵⁴ the magnetic treatment can therefore be described as a *Zaubercur*, a *magic* cure, where the *magic* is precisely this limit of inexplicability.¹⁵⁵

Many studies on animal magnetism attempt to define, also terminologically, the phase of magnetic sleep. Wienholt, for example, objects that the term *somnambulism* should not be applied here, in that it recalls nocturnal somnambulism, which cannot be compared to the state of the magnetized patient. Wienholt therefore asks if the terms *Entzückung* (ecstatic rapture), *Ekstase* (ecstasy), or even the word *Krise* (crisis), are more appropriate, but here too the answer is no: ecstasy in fact describes, in his view, a state influenced by too vivid an imagination, which leads to a condition of forgetfulness of self “and of all the rest”. It must therefore be concluded that there is still no word to describe the extraordinary effect of the magnetic cure, and that the expression “magnetic sleep” remains for the moment the best choice.¹⁵⁶

Starting off from this terminological difficulty, it is therefore no surprise that the first German experts on animal magnetism provide different and often mutually discordant interpretations of the meaning and importance of reaching this enlightened state on the part of the patient who is subjected to the magnetizing cure. According to Wolfart, this is to all intents and purposes a state of *enlightenment*, which therefore transcends the bounds of medical science and makes animal magnetism not only a curing process but also, and especially, a path that leads to a deep consciousness of nature, which cannot be provided even by scientific study or an understanding of natural laws. On the other hand, in the view of C. W. Hufeland and Stieglitz, somnambulism and the condition of the *clairvoyant* are none other than *sick*, pathological states that must not be regarded as a direct consequence – and certainly not the purpose – of the magnetic treatment.¹⁵⁷ Wolfart's response is

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 213: “Die höhere Fähigkeit des Clairvoyant, die Gedanken des Magnetiseurs zu wissen, und gleichsam in seiner Seele zu lesen, wird wohl für immer unerklärbar bleiben”. Cf. also *ibid.*, 204, where the relationship between patient and curer is defined in terms of a “sympathische[s] Verhältnis”.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 33. The abovementioned (see above, note 142) novel by P. O. Enquist *The Magnetist's Fifth Winter* gives an accurate reconstruction (despite the fictional form of the story) of the climate of ‘mystical inexplicability’ surrounding the first reception of the theory of mesmerism and the figure of the magnetizer, the main character of the novel, Meisner, inspired by the figure of Mesmer. The word *mysticism* appears several times through story and, significantly, is used to describe the approach diametrically opposite to rationality. Particularly notable is a passage where the voice of the narrator asks the protagonist, Meisner, if he regards himself as a mystic, and he replies yes: Enquist (1989), 159: “In this context I call to mind a conversation I have had with Meisner. I asked him whether he was a mystic. He replied yes. Whereupon I mentioned Eckhart's name. Meisner's reaction to this was exceedingly surprising. He broke out into angry animadversions on Eckhart, declaring his mysticism to be no more than a subtler form of belief in reason. So I asked him what he meant by mysticism, and what, in his opinion, constitutes true mysticism. ‘A level beneath the world's houses’, he replied enigmatically.”

¹⁵⁶ Wienholt (1787), 22 et seq.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Stieglitz (1814), 13: “Was diesen [*somnambulism*] und die Clairvoyance betrifft, so ist es nicht nur der einfacheren, bestimmteren Beurtheilung des wichtigen Gegenstandes angemessen, diese höchst verwickelten und dunklen Zustände von der allgemeinen Schilderung der durch magnetische Manipulationen hervorgebrachten Wirkungen auszuschließen und sie später einer

peremptory: neither magnetic sleep nor the contents and visions that are *revealed* (Wolfart uses the verb *offenbaren*) to the patient in the state of *Hellsehen* can be regarded as symptoms of a sick condition.¹⁵⁸ If animal magnetism is understood in the development of all its potential, not just curative, then it becomes an effective method for exploring the boundary between *sinnlich* and *übersinnlich*, between the natural world and the sphere of the supernatural.¹⁵⁹ In Germany, the debate on the role of Mesmer's theory ended up in this way in a discussion on the point that divides (but also joins) the measurable and tangible universe of science from a further dimension, independent of earthly laws, that can be defined as *mystical*.¹⁶⁰

Kieser devoted various essays to this problem which were published in the pages of the *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus*. In one essay, significantly titled *Mystizismus*,¹⁶¹ Kieser set out to clarify the reasons why the theory of animal magnetism must be kept rigidly within the bounds of science, avoiding the esoteric shifts of certain scholars and their interest in the visionary possibilities of magnetic sleep. According to Kieser the state of *Hellsehen* (to which he refers even when he speaks of a magical and mystical element, "das Magische und Mystische")¹⁶² must not be regarded as a state of maximum *clarity* (as is suggested by the word *hell*: *clear*, *luminous*), but rather of obscurity and confusion, nor of an *elevated* condition, but rather of a *sunken* (*versunken*) terrain, from which it is necessary to rise back up to the light and to the heights of reason.¹⁶³ That which seems *incomprehensible* –

besonderen Erörterung zu unterziehen, sondern ich hoffe auch überwiegende Gründe geltend machen zu können, daß man sie nicht als unmittelbare Wirkungen des thierischen Magnetismus, und mit demselben nur entfernter, mittelbar und höchst selten, in Verbindung stehend, ansehen muß." And 151: "Es mußte daher angenommen werden, daß der Somnambulismus und die Clairvoyance eigenthümliche, selbständige Krankheitszustände sind".

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Wolfart (1816), 52: "Der magnetische Schlaf, sammt allem was sich in der geistigen Welt darin entwickeln und offenbaren mag, ist *keine Krankheit*, wie die Herren Verfasser wollen, wenn er nicht durch unrichtiges Verfahren dazu gemacht wird."

¹⁵⁹ In this respect see also Hufeland (1811), 69–70.

¹⁶⁰ Significantly, in an essay entitled *Der Mystizismus des Mittelalters in seiner Entstehungsperiode* (Schmid (1824), 27), the professor of philosophy at Jena H. Schmid, suggests that magnetism is often misunderstood through the inappropriate introduction of mystical beliefs, ignoring the natural laws and their limits. See also in this respect an interesting note by Gostick (1849), 305: "Germany has long been noted for the production of mystical books, that a few remarks may be necessary here to explain the characteristic of such writings. The term 'mystic' is strictly applicable to the theological doctrines of such writers such as Tauler in the fourteenth, and Böhme in the sixteenth century; but many other works, including several on philosophy, and even on natural science, may be fairly described as mystical. Mysticism begins where inductive science ends; or, in other words, when a writer, not satisfied with the imperfections of reasoning from facts, endeavours to form theories on the ground of so-called 'intuitions' or 'sentiments.'"

¹⁶¹ Cf. Eschenmayer et al. (1817–1824), vol. 2, part 2 (1817), 63–147. This in reality is the second part (124–147) of an essay entitled *Rhapsodien aus dem Gebiet des thierischen Magnetismus*, whose first part (63–123) is entitled: *Wie fördern wir den thierischen Magnetismus, und was ist für denselben einstweilen zu thun?*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*: "Denn indem unsere Zeitschrift vom *wissenschaftlichen Standpunkt* ausgehend, das Magische und Mystische in seiner Wurzel zu ergreifen und sich tief in dasselbe zu versenken sucht,

Kluge describes *clairvoyance* in these very terms – must be rendered comprehensible, and this process also takes place through a confrontation with that mystical chaos (a real *Strudel*!) from which it is nevertheless necessary to re-emerge.¹⁶⁴

In the same essay dedicated to *mysticism*, Kieser criticizes the “sentimental tendency” of some of his contemporaries, where it is clear that the two adjectives *sentimental* and *mystical* are intimately connected with each other and used almost as synonyms.¹⁶⁵ The mysticism described by Kieser in this context is therefore an inclination toward sentiment and an abandonment to an attitude of faith (*Glauben*), to the detriment of rigorous and logical learning (*Wissen*). This type of mysticism would find particularly fertile terrain in the doctrine of animal magnetism, into which it would be introduced causing the subversion of the scientific approach to the theory itself.

Here it should be pointed out that Kieser's criticism of this form of mysticism strongly resembles Hegel's attack on the anti-philosophical mysticism of the Romantics and of Schelling in his preface to *Phenomenology*, which will be discussed in detail later.¹⁶⁶ Sentimental mysticism is in fact fueled, according to Kieser, by thoughts and feelings that come from a dark and mysterious realm (“das dunkle Reich”), encourages abandonment to dreaming (as the word *träumend* suggests) and to the sleep of reason, of intellectual force (the verb *einschlafen* is used), and finally builds a limit, a secret that for science is insurmountable (“das unerforschliche Geheimnis”).¹⁶⁷ These exact characteristics have allowed the

aber nur, um mit vollem Bewußtseyn aus dem Strudel des Mystizismus wieder ins lichte Leben der Vernunft aufzutauchen, soll sie nur dienen, die Wissenschaft zu fördern, das Unbegriffene begreifbar zu machen, das scheinbar außer der Natur liegende auf sein natürliches Gesetz zurückzuführen, und also dem Mystizismus entgegen zu wirken.” In this respect, it is notable that Kluge (1818), 28, describes Mesmer's theory as a “mystical chiaroscuro” (“mystische[s] Helldunkel”) into which no one has the courage to look.

¹⁶⁴ One look at the titles of the essays by D. G. Kieser shows clearly how the subject of magical and generally mysterious phenomena were examined repeatedly by him and with clear interest. Consider, for example, Kieser's essay *Daemonophania, bei einem wachenden Somnambul beobachtet vom Professor Dr. D.G. Kieser*, which ends significantly with a “Wissenschaftliche Erklärung”, a scientific explanation. See Kieser (1819).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Eschenmayer et al. (1817–1824), vol. 2, part 2 (1817), 127–128: “Wir meinen die *sentimentale Tendenz der Zeit*, welche statt des klaren und bestimmten Wissens sich mit dunklem Ahnden begnügt, welche den Glauben über das Wissen setzend, von jeder entgegen tretenden Beschränkung des Wissens zurückgeschreckt sich in das dunkle Reich mysteriöser Gefühle und gottseliger Gedanken zu retten sucht, und in träumender Hingebung an das unerforschliche Geheimnis des Lebens alle intellectuelle Kraft und Thätigkeit einschlafen läßt.” Cf. also *ibid.*, 135: “Diese mystische Tendenz der Zeit, welche sich auch in der Lehre vom thierischen Magnetismus um so mehr zeigt, je mehr sie durch denselben Nahrung zu gewinnen scheint, und welcher die Wissenschaft entgegenzuarbeiten um so dringenderen Beruf hat, je mehr sie alles ernste, strenge und consequente Wissen zu verdrängen droht, drückt sich nun hier auf verschiedene Weise, bald noch unter dem Mantel der Philosophie, bald ganz offenkündig aus.”

¹⁶⁶ Cf. below, Chap. 2, Sect. 2.1.

¹⁶⁷ In this respect, see also Eschenmayer et al. (1817–1824), vol. 2, part 2 (1817), 139: “Statt dahin zu streben, zur wahren Physik und Mathematik zu gelangen, und des höhern Lebens der Natur wissenschaftlich bewußt zu werden, begnügen sie sich dann, wenn ihnen ihre Formeln den Dienst

formation of a spontaneous bond between this form of mysticism and the theory of animal magnetism in its most controversial aspects.

At this point it ought to be explained how the mysticism of Jakob Böhme was acknowledged in Germany through the emergence of interest in mesmeric practice. Firstly it should be noted that the concept of mysticism is linked to a particularly problematic point in mesmeric doctrine, namely in the problem of *Hellsehen*, which is understood as a visionary capacity to attain a knowledge that is almost supernatural in nature, and therefore bears the features of a mystical experience of divine revelation. In the interpretation of certain scholars, animal magnetism, as Kieser critically points out, offers a space solely and exclusively for a certain understanding of the mystical phenomenon, which the publisher of the *Archiv* classifies as sentimental and hostile to the scientific approach. This is crucial for the reception of Böhme's mysticism which, as seen in the previous section, recommenced in Germany with a strongly standardized interpretation that views the simple cobbler Jakob Böhme as enlightened by God. It is therefore no surprise that this very interpretation of Böhme's mysticism – certainly a limited interpretation and far away from the meaning Böhme gives to the role of the mystic in his writings – found points of contact with a certain mystical-sentimental reinterpretation of the curative practice elaborated by Mesmer. For example, Johann Karl Passavant,¹⁶⁸ the expert on animal magnetism and a reader of Böhme, combines a Romantic emphasis of the exceptional nature of the cobbler with a new element that comes from his study of Mesmer: Böhme, in his view, wrote his works in a state similar to magnetic *Hellsehen*.¹⁶⁹

In only a few cases, the most important of which is certainly that of Franz von Baader, do writers dealing with animal magnetism refer *directly* to Böhme; despite this, the themes and terminology of Böhme can be recognized in certain elaborations of mesmeric theory. The link is therefore indirect in two ways: firstly, because it seems to develop spontaneously (the concept of mysticism in some mesmeric literature strongly resembles that applied between 1700 and 1800 to the case and figure of Böhme), and also because it is possible to identify a substantial group of readers of Böhme's works who were interested in animal magnetism, and in certain cases actively experimented and practiced it. Among the most important of these are obviously Schelling and Baader, but also Eschenmayer and, at least to a certain

versagen, mit mystischen Worten, die der Phantasiewelt freien Spielraum lassen, den Verstand täuschen, und ihn zu überreden suchen, mit dem mystischen Worte auch den hellen Begriff erfaßt zu haben, und die *Mystik der Physik*, welche alles Weiterforschen lähmt, ist geboren."

¹⁶⁸ Callisen (1833), 337, writes in relation to Passavant: "Passavant (Johann Carl) zu Frankfurt? Med. Dr., hielt mehrere Jahre Vorlesungen über den Lebensmagnetismus".

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Bürke (1958), 173: "Aber auch Jakob Böhme, 'ein sehr wunderbarer und merkwürdiger Mann', verfaßte seine Schriften meist in solchen Zuständen, die 'der Ekstase und dem Hellsehen' verwandt sind." The quotation comes from Passavant's *Untersuchungen über den Lebensmagnetismus und das Hellsehen* (1821). As Bürke also points out, the source of information used by Passavant for the life of Böhme is certainly Franckenberg's biography (the remark "ein sehr wunderbarer und merkwürdiger Mann" is a direct reference to the language of the famous biographer). Passavant also interprets the gift granted by God to the prophets of the Old Testament tradition as a form of *Hellsehen* (cf. *ibid.*, 172–173).

extent, Görres, who are particularly relevant to our study because they are directly criticized by Hegel in his preface to *Phenomenology*. In the following section we shall consider the main aspects of Böhme's mysticism that were integrated into the theory of animal magnetism, with particular attention to Baader's interpretation, and to its contact with pietism – a tradition that seems to run parallel to the debate on the connection between mysticism and *Naturphilosophie*, and which repeatedly intersects with these themes.

2.2 Böhme's Mysticism Between Paracelsus and Theosophy

The rediscovery of Böhme's mysticism and the opening of debate on animal magnetism in Germany were two related events. First, it can be pointed out that the theory of animal magnetism developed in France, and returned, one might say, from France to Germany in the way already outlined. In the same way, the process of rediscovery and rehabilitation of Böhme's mysticism in the mystic's home country was also favored by the work of a diligent French reader, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, who had studied German for the very purpose of reading *Theosophia Revelata* in its original language. Saint-Martin's theosophical writings were particularly successful in Germany: by 1782, Matthias Claudius had produced a German translation of Saint-Martin's *Des erreurs et de la vérité*,¹⁷⁰ described as a "mystical book" in a review that appeared in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* thirty years later.¹⁷¹ Saint-Martin was indeed to become one of the major sources on Böhme's thought for the German public, and his writings, broadly inspired by his reading of Böhme, as well as owing much to his choice of language, spread rapidly, so that they may well have been more readily available in Germany than the shoemaker's work itself.¹⁷² It is, in effect, possible to identify a whole series of German scholars who most probably came into contact with Böhme's work through Saint-Martin and his *theosophical* re-elaborations of the cobbler's mysticism: the most important example of this is Franz von Baader.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ In this respect, see Sánchez de Murillo (1986), 191.

¹⁷¹ ALZ, 2.171 (1812), 513–518, here 513. This comment is contained in a review (in the German translation by Schubert) to Saint-Martin (1811).

¹⁷² According to Sánchez de Murillo (1986), 191, Saint-Martin was the main intermediary in the rediscovery of Böhme in Germany: "Ähnlich wie Matthias Claudius setzte sich auch Kleuker (später auf Anregung Baaders auch G.H. von Schubert) für St. Martin ein. Auf diesem Umwege durch Frankreich, wo er wohl über Holland eintrat, kehrte Böhme ins deutsche Geistesleben zurück." In my view, however, it is incorrect to regard Saint-Martin's writings as the only factor that led to the rediscovery of Böhme in Germany. The reception of Böhme's work by the early Romantics is in fact a complicated event, directly and exclusively linked only in a few cases to the reading of Saint-Martin. Fischer (1931), 27, for example, underlines the fact that Clemens Brentano read Saint-Martin as well as Böhme.

¹⁷³ Hamberger (1855), 9.

It is certainly relevant that Saint-Martin was interested in animal magnetism,¹⁷⁴ and in this sense the 'combined return' of animal magnetism and of a certain interpretation of Böhme's work from France to Germany is a first link in the structure of this encounter which has significantly molded the nineteenth-century perception of the figure and mysticism of the shoemaker. It must therefore be noted that many who studied animal magnetism knew and were interested in Böhme: if their interpretations of Böhme's mysticism share certain prime characteristics, this is because they move on common ground. It should be emphasized however that Hegel's interpretation differs radically from that traditional reception of Böhme's mysticism – and this will be a crucial point to which we will return later.

In his famous *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie (Manual of the History of Philosophy)*, Rixner dedicates a section to the following subject: "Mystics of the second half of the eighteenth century; struggle of mystics against dogmatics and of magical magnetizers against medical mechanists and chemists".¹⁷⁵ Magical magnetizers are placed here alongside the tradition of the mystics, in that the opposition of these last against the *dogmatics* exactly reproduces the contrast between the vitality of the theory of mesmerism and the mechanization of nature on the part of official medicine. In this chapter of the *Manual*, Rixner makes as much reference to the theosophy of Saint-Martin (who is included among the mystics of the second half of the eighteenth century)¹⁷⁶ as to Mesmer's theory, so that they therefore find a new point of contact. An important indication is provided by the very definition of mesmerism as "magical magnetism". The concept of magic (*Magie*) represents in fact the fundamental aspect that the theory of animal magnetism has taken and reformulated from the tradition of German mysticism, and in particular from the work of Böhme.

In a brief essay entitled *Animalischer Magnetismus und Magie*, Schopenhauer traces the line of transmission that leads from Paracelsus to Böhme and his followers (especially his English followers), and finally to Mesmer and those who studied animal magnetism in the nineteenth century, where the concept of *Magie*, with its transformations, was the intermediary. The principle on which the effect of magnetic therapy is based, writes Schopenhauer, is in fact said to be the so-called *Nervengeist*, which however "is only a word for something unknown".¹⁷⁷ This is where the discussion on magic arises, whose basis is deep-rooted in human nature, if not in the objective nature of things.¹⁷⁸ This *inner* aspect of magic and the practice of magic, which represents the basis of the "curative force" inexplicably summoned by the magnetic healer, was investigated in particular by Paracelsus, who therefore forms

¹⁷⁴ Cf. for example von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 4, 17.

¹⁷⁵ Rixner (1829), vol. 3, 272 et seq.: "Mystiker der zweiten Hälfte des 18ten Jahrhunderts; Kampf der Mystiker gegen die Dogmatiker und der magischen Magnetiseurs gegen die ärztlichen Mechaniker und Chemiker."

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 275. Rixner refers also to Swedenborg, on whose thought the influence of Böhme can be recognized (cf. *ibid.*, 273).

¹⁷⁷ Schopenhauer (1989), vol. 3, 423.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 436.

the background of this tradition. In the description of Paracelsus the concept of *Magie* (magic) intersects with two other fundamental concepts: *Imagination* (imagination) and *Glauben* (faith), where the three terms therefore constitute a single system of reference. The link between imagination, belief and magic lead directly to Böhme, for whom *Imagination* is a creative force that can destroy and recreate, forming (literally) new worlds and opening up new possibilities: it is no coincidence that the fall, first of Lucifer and then of Adam, is interpreted as an imaginative act, though with terrible consequences.¹⁷⁹ Following this reasoning, Schopenhauer quotes from Böhme's *Kurze Erklärung sechs mystischer Punkte*: "he [Böhme] says among other things: 'Magic is the mother of the being of all beings, since it makes itself and is understood in *desire*. The true magic is no being, but rather the *desiring spirit* of being. In short, magic is deed in the spirit that wills.'¹⁸⁰ What strikes Schopenhauer most of all in this quote is naturally the reference to desire (*Begierde*), and above all to will (*Wille*) – to the "spirit that wills" (*Willengeist*), as Böhme puts it – which in his view represents the very essence of magic, as if to say that the concept of *will* is in reality the true driving action that Paracelsus, and Böhme after him, described as *magic*.¹⁸¹

But leaving aside Schopenhauer's speculation on magic as an expression of will, I would like to draw attention once more to the exact line of tradition to which Schopenhauer refers, namely the line that leads from Paracelsus to Böhme, then to Saint-Martin and Mesmer. It is notable that in this way Böhme's mysticism is linked, on the one hand, to a certain understanding of *Naturphilosophie* (from Paracelsus to Mesmer, through the role of magic) and, on the other, to an equally specific concept of *mysticism*, namely the *theosophy* of Saint-Martin. From here on it will be necessary to return several times to this pattern of development, since Hegel's criticism is concerned with exactly this kind of reception of Böhme's mysticism.

The same interpretative tradition to which Schopenhauer refers represents the basic structure for *Fermenta cognitionis* by Franz von Baader, published in six volumes between 1822 and 1825.¹⁸² In *Fermenta cognitionis* the relationship between Böhme and animal magnetism, on the one hand, and Saint-Martin's the-

¹⁷⁹ For a brief overview on Böhme's use of *Imagination* see BS, vol. 11, 230–231 (*Register über alle theosophische Schriften [...] Drittes Register*). On the concept of *imagination* in Böhme, see also Koyré (1929), 218–219.

¹⁸⁰ Schopenhauer (1989), vol. 3, 455: "Er [Böhme] sagt unter anderm: 'Magie ist die Mutter des Wesens aller Wesen; denn sie macht sich selber und wird in der *Begierde* verstanden. – Die rechte Magia ist kein Wesen, sondern der *begehrende Geist* des Wesens. – In summa: Magie ist das Tun im *Willengeist*.'"

¹⁸¹ Schopenhauer in fact comments in these terms on the passage by Böhme that I have cited: "Als Bestätigung oder jedenfalls als Erläuterung der dargelegten Ansicht von dem Willen als dem wahren Agens der Magie" (*ibid.*).

¹⁸² It is interesting to note that most of the sources cited by Baader in *Fermenta cognitionis* are certainly Böhme, Saint-Martin and Hegel, with repeated references to Paracelsus, Silesius and Maistre, as well as the basic texts on animal magnetism.

osophy, on the other, is described and examined in detail. Above all, Baader also recognizes that Paracelsus's conception of nature, seen as a vital organism in which the power of imagination operates, forms the background of the new theory of mesmerism.¹⁸³ What is more, the very study of the concept of imagination in Böhme's interpretation of the word makes it possible, according to Baader, to understand the bases and therefore the way that magnetic treatment works, as if to say that the *Imaginieren* itself, of which Böhme speaks, represents the basic structure of animal magnetism.¹⁸⁴ Once again, therefore, the connection between Paracelsus, Böhme and Mesmer's practice is directly established.

Baader's interpretation, however, goes far beyond Schopenhauer's more curt description: Baader is in fact profoundly impressed by Böhme's theory of *Natursprache* and embarks upon a bold explanation of the deep consonance between the cobbler's mysticism and mesmerism. According to the laws of *Natursprache*, words reveal their deepest significance through the assonances that link them together in sound, in such a way to form chains of words and complex structures of references and associations, with dense undertones of meaning.¹⁸⁵ Baader uses the principle of *Natursprache* when he refers to the relationship between the words *Magie* (magic), *Imago* (image) and *Magnes* (magnet).¹⁸⁶ the recurrence of the syllable *ma*, together with the *g* sound, suggests they are linked in meaning. Starting off from sound perception it is therefore possible to understand that the imagination is an integral part of magic, and that Mesmer had given expression to this power through the use of magic: in the assonance of words, Böhme's lexicon therefore encounters the concepts of the new theory of animal magnetism, which seems almost like the natural evolution of Böhme's mysticism.¹⁸⁷ In the third volume of

¹⁸³ Cf. FC, vol. 2, 218. On the link between Paracelsus, Böhme and animal magnetism, see also FC, vol. 3, 269.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, vol. 3, 260: "Was hier von dem *Imaginieren* gesagt worden, gibt uns Licht über das sogenannte *Magnetisieren*".

¹⁸⁵ With regard to Böhme's *Natursprache* see AuN, ch. 4.1 of my introduction.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. for example FC, vol. 3, 268. See also von Baader (1817), 11–12, where Baader argues for the need to rehabilitate the concept of *Magic*, and to do this he refers directly to Böhme and the connection between the words *Magic-Magnet-Imago*.

¹⁸⁷ In this respect see the introduction by Procesi Xella to von Baader (1982), 18–19: "[...] Baader places the doctrine of imagination and of productive imagination at the center of his speculation, based on the biblical narration of the creation of Adam in the image and likeness of God, and proposes an original Romantic re-elaboration of Kant's theory of transcendental schematism, which he reinterprets in the light of the theosophical naturalism of Paracelsus and Böhme, extended by the new scientific discoveries in the field of electricity and magnetism – *Imago, magnes, magia, Maja* are all synonyms, whose semantic richness is due to their close connection with the word and with the concept of *gignere*, since it is in the relationship between *genitor* and *genitus* that *imaginem-gignere*, i.e. the imagination, is realized, which will therefore be productive in the most radical sense, as a process of generation in which the indeterminate is determined, at every level of reality and of knowledge."

Fermenta cognitionis we read in explicit terms: "magnetizing is no more nor less than imagining".¹⁸⁸ The action is therefore the same.¹⁸⁹

One could quite properly conclude that the basis on which the possibility and effectiveness of magnetic curative treatment is founded, namely imaginative power, also called *magic*, is not only no different to Böhme's concept of *Imaginieren*, but even seems identical to it. Böhme's idea of the creative capacity of the imagination therefore seems to be floated within the theory of animal magnetism. Yet the passage quoted offers another point of contact: in the interdependence of the two poles (active and passive, magnetizer and magnetized) Baader doubtless sees another feature of Böhme's mysticism reinterpreted by mesmerism.¹⁹⁰ For this reason Baader calls attention to the fact that those studying animal magnetism should have a correct understanding of the problem of the conflict between the positive pole and the negative pole, and therefore of their possible reunification¹⁹¹ – Baader himself obviously regards Böhme's writings as a source of inspiration on this matter. The play of polarities represents above all the basis for a dynamic and vital conception of nature, exactly like that of Böhme, which is therefore summoned (as in Rixner's *Manual*) in support of the theory of animal magnetism, presented as a *dynamic* and not as a *mechanical* science.¹⁹² Against the relentless mechanization of nature, which was afflicting science in the early 1800s, Baader affirms the need to return to the sources of the alchemical and theosophical tradition – in the first place Paracelsus and Böhme – and to a *dynamic* concept of the natural world, like that offered by animal magnetism.¹⁹³ In *Beyträge zur dynamischen Philosophie im Gegensatze der mechanischen* (*Contributions on the Dynamic Philosophy as Opposed to the*

¹⁸⁸ FC, vol. 3, 268: "Denn Magnetisiren ist nicht minder und mehr als Imaginiren, und der durch selbes *erzeugte* Rapport gründet sich in einer Constellation (18.), d. h. der Magnetiseur (sei dieser nun wer er will, denn nicht immer tritt solcher als Mensch auf) ist in der Regel das active Gestirn, der Magnetisirte (ob somnambul oder nicht) das ihm entsprechende passive, obschon diese Pole sich oft auch umkehren."

¹⁸⁹ See the heading *Imagination* in *Register* at the conclusion of von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 18, *sub voce*.

¹⁹⁰ On the importance of the contradiction (*Widerspruch*) between the two poles, positive and negative, in Böhme, see FC, vol. 1, para. 10.

¹⁹¹ Cf. FC, vol. 3, 261. The criticism is directed in particular to F. Hufeland and his *Über Sympathie*.

¹⁹² In this respect, see Baader (1809), especially ch. 10, 150–158 (reproduced with the title *Ueber den Begriff der dynamischen Bewegung im Gegensatze der mechanischen* in von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 3, 277–286), where it is stated that whereas for mechanical movement it is true that a place cannot be occupied by two bodies in the same moment, in the case of dynamic movement "anima est ubi amat", in other words, there is fusion and exchange.

¹⁹³ Cf. Procesi Xella (1976), 556: "Mechanical physics, Baader claims, by misunderstanding the dialectic function of matter and its 'fluidity', has shattered the cosmos into a cluster of juxtaposed parts, which contradict its organic and hierarchical structure, and by affirming the impenetrability of matter has in fact made nature, and, above all, the human world into an 'in itself' in relation to God, thus denying the truth of the mystical body." Cf. also *ibid.*, 561 (note): "One of the causes which according to Baader has favored the rampancy of this 'aberrant' philosophy of nature has been the indifference or rejection by German culture of the medieval alchemical-theosophical tradition, and, above all, the teaching of Paracelsus and Böhme".

Mechanic Philosophy), for example, one of the fundamental writings in which Baader seeks to build the foundations for a new dynamic and metaphysical conception of matter, the three basic forces of Paracelsus's *Naturphilosophie*, namely *Sal*, *Mercurius* and *Sulphur*, are presented almost as an antidote to Newtonian mechanism,¹⁹⁴ adopted also by the critical philosophy of Kant (who, not surprisingly, condemned out of hand any form of hylozoism).¹⁹⁵ Paracelsus's three principles, which, in different proportions, make up every natural substance and whose imbalance is the cause of the various sicknesses, represent the mainstays of a vitalistic interpretation of the natural world.¹⁹⁶ the idea of the fluidity of nature, in which the three principles move, increase or diminish within bodies, replaces the conception of matter as an inert mass.¹⁹⁷ From Baader's point of view, Böhme's mystical philosophy and Paracelsus's *Naturphilosophie* come together and complement each other so that, in the last analysis, the first is unimaginable without the second.¹⁹⁸

Within this re-evaluation of the dynamism of nature, considered not as a dead object but rather as living and pulsating, crossed by forces and unyielding to any purely quantitative analysis, Baader's interest is in those phenomena that are traditionally considered as being on the boundary between natural and supernatural: in particular, the mystical experience of *clairvoyance* discussed in the previous section. The value of animal magnetism lies, according to Baader, in its very ability to extend and challenge the boundary between natural and supernatural which, according to official science, remains fixed and rigid:¹⁹⁹ the writings of Böhme and Paracelsus therefore become a guide to understanding the true potential of nature.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁴ In Paracelsian terms *Sal*, *Mercurius* and *Sulphur* appear explicitly in the second edition of *Beyträge* (1809), whereas in the first (1796) Baader spoke more generally about *Naturseelekräfte*. According to Baumgardt, however, Baader was already referring to Paracelsus's *Naturphilosophie* in the first edition (cf. Baumgardt (1927), 187–188).

¹⁹⁵ On Baader's criticism of Kant's conception of nature, see: Baumgardt (1927), 178 et seq., and in particular 179–180: "Baader [...] erklärt schon 1796 geradezu: der Hylozoismus ist nicht, wie Kant meinte, 'der Tod aller wahren, gesunden Naturphilosophie'; er ist höchstens 'der Tod – aller toten, z. B. der Newtonschen usw.' (XV 166)."

¹⁹⁶ On Paracelsus's conception of the three principles of *Sal*, *Mercurius* and *Sulphur* see: Bianchi (1995), in particular 16–17 and 36–38.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Baumgardt (1927), 188–189, where it is underlined that Baader, by reviving the alchemical tradition, re-elaborates the already Romantic theme of the fluidity of nature.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. von Baader (1982), 527, where Baader regrets the fact that the "German philosophers" continue to ignore "the results achieved by Paracelsus and by the *Philosophus Teutonicus*".

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Procesi Xella (1976), 383: "Baader feels that magnetic phenomena get away from a traditional, mechanistic conception of physics, in the same way as extrasensory phenomena".

²⁰⁰ It should be pointed out that Baader, though showing a clear interest in animal magnetism and especially in *Hellsehen/clairvoyance*, nevertheless criticizes Mesmer himself for not having developed the possibilities of his theory, and for having in the last analysis encouraged superstition (*Aberglauben*), rather than trying to integrate the extraordinary results of magnetic practice within Christianity. With regard to the complex problem of Baader's relationship with Mesmer's theory, see F. Hoffmann's introduction to: von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 4, 43–52. Hoffmann also discusses the contentious debate between Baader and Kieser over the significance to be attributed to the state of *Hellsehen*, where Kieser criticizes the excessively mystical (*mystisch*) and enthusiastic

As for the specific phenomenon of *clairvoyance*, Baader states that it hasn't been given proper attention, even though many treatises have been written about it.²⁰¹ The magic-divining gift of the magnetic somnambulist should therefore be a reminder that man possesses the capacity to obtain access to an understanding of the world thanks to the help of two types of light, namely natural sunlight, through which we merely see what there is around us, and a higher and more powerful light, through which the vision of the world is raised to a higher state. This latter light allows access to a state of *Hellsehen* much deeper and more significant than what can be reached through magnetic treatment. Baader therefore considers magnetic *clairvoyance* almost as an inferior state to the *Hellsehen* attained by prophets: this second type, while remaining an entirely earthly experience and lived through the body, leads in the ultimate analysis to a vision of God – but a God who is constantly moving out of sight.²⁰² The state of the patient who is magnetized and has become *Hellseher* is therefore only the first step on the way toward re-attaining that *prophetic* condition that belongs in truth to all human beings, but which has now been forgotten, so that no one is any longer able to recognize it.²⁰³ Mesmer's theory has therefore taken a significant step toward this rediscovery, but does not yet represent the point of arrival. In comparison with those considered earlier who are studying animal magnetism, Baader interprets *clairvoyance* in more markedly prophetic terms, within a theosophical framework provided by the writings of Saint-Martin.²⁰⁴ It is no coincidence that at the beginning of the third part of the work entitled *Über Ekstase*, Baader quotes a passage from Saint-Martin relating to Mesmer and animal magnetism, where it says that Mesmer has opened the doors to “tangible demonstrations of the spirit”.²⁰⁵ Animal magnetism – a theory elaborated by an *incrédule* (a materialist!) – can be developed to its true potential only if it is used as a starting point, from which then to sink down into that realm of the spirit that Mesmer, according to Saint-Martin, had ignored. With this reference to Saint-Martin, Baader in fact takes a leap beyond that frontier between natural and supernatural whose limit had already been debated in various studies on animal magnetism that we have considered. The French theosophist appears as the one who has completed Mesmer's doctrine, and Jakob Böhme – Saint-Martin's constant point of reference – enters

(*schwärmerisch*) approach of Baader, who interprets the intuitions (*Anschauungen*) of the magnetized state as revelations of faith (cf. *ibid.*, 49).

²⁰¹ FC, vol. 1, 182.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 183: “Und so schauen wir Gott (seine Herrlichkeit), aber durchschauen diese nicht”.

²⁰³ Cf. von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 4, 22: “Alle Menschen sind *todtgeborne* Seher (Propheten) und die Erscheinungen des Somnambulismus sollen allerdings dazu dienen, sowohl den Glauben als die Hoffnung der Wiedererweckbarkeit dieser Gabe wieder zu beleben.”

²⁰⁴ Kieser indeed classifies the interpretation of animal magnetism provided by Baader as “mystisch-gläubig-orthodox” (see Mewald (1961), 7–8). Procesi Xella also notes that Baader's interest in the extraordinary phenomenon of *clairvoyance* increases – as the correspondence shows – in the years between 1809 and 1817 (Procesi Xella (1976), 383–384).

²⁰⁵ von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 4, 17.

into the heart of the discussion on the conjunction between mysticism and *Naturphilosophie*.²⁰⁶

As already mentioned, Baader became interested in Böhme's writings through the works of Saint-Martin – whom he recommended to anyone as an introduction to mysticism of the Teutonic philosopher.²⁰⁷ His contact with the theosophy of Saint-Martin came, in turn, through a book by Kleuker, one of the first and most enthusiastic German readers of the French theosophist, entitled *Magikon, oder das geheime System einer Gesellschaft unbekannter Philosophen* (*Magikon, or The Secret System of a Society of Unknown Philosophers*), published anonymously in 1782, which contained extracts from two fundamental writings by Saint-Martin, *Des erreurs et de la vérité* and *Tableau naturel des rapports qui existent entre Dieu, l'homme et l'univers*. Going back one stage further in this chain, we discover that Kleuker's book had been recommended to Baader by Johann Michael Sailer, a Jesuit theologian²⁰⁸ and professor of philosophy and theology at the universities of Ingolstadt (where Baader himself had studied), Dillingen and Landshut. Under Sailer's influence, Baader became interested in pietist mystical texts, in Lavater²⁰⁹ and – indirectly through Kleuker – in Saint-Martin.²¹⁰ It is therefore possible to add a further element to the interpretative tradition of Böhman mysticism outlined so far (namely, the reception of Böhme through the link with Paracelsus, with animal magnetism, and with the theosophy of Saint-Martin), in other words, pietism. Sailer was also in contact with Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, one of the leading figures of so-called Swabian pietism,²¹¹ and also the author of a text which, as its title indicates, seeks to encourage the reading of Böhme's writings: *Aufmunternde Gründe zur Lesung der Schriften Jakob Böhmes* (*Encouraging Reasons to Read Jakob Böhme's Writings*) (1731).²¹² Oetinger's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism also played an important role for Baader, who wrote about the pietist theologian in

²⁰⁶ On Baader's conviction that the *imagination* represents the clearest point of contact between the theosophical doctrine of Saint-Martin, Böhme and Paracelsus, see the introduction of L. Procesi Xella to von Baader (1982), in particular 18.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Kemp (1998), 27: "Zu der von G. H. Schubert, dem Verfasser der *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*, besorgten Übersetzung eines späteren Werkes, *Vom Geist und Wesen der Dinge*, schrieb Baader 1812 eine Vorrede, in der er die Werke Saint-Martins 'als Einleitung zum Studium der Werke des *Philosophus teutonicus*' empfiehlt."

²⁰⁸ It should be remembered that the Jesuit colleges played an important role in the development of the theory of animal magnetism (cf. above, note 144).

²⁰⁹ On Baader's use of Lavater's thought, see Baumgardt (1927), 177. On the link between the theory of animal magnetism and Lavater's thought, see Wienholt (1787).

²¹⁰ Cf. Procesi Xella (1976), 63–64. In a letter dated 16 March 1815, Sailer advised his friend F. K. von Savigny to read Böhme and Saint-Martin, where it is apparent therefore that Sailer was aware of an immediate link between the German mystic and the French theosophist (cf. Benz (1983), 82).

²¹¹ On Swabian pietism, we will return in the next section to consider the supposed influence of the Hegel and Schelling *Stift* on young students (cf. below, Chap. 1, Sect. 3.2).

²¹² Cf. Bürke (1958), 160. Cf. also Sailer (1948–1952), vol. 2, 347–348.

a letter to Stransky: "I don't know anyone after Oetinger who understood or understands J. Böhme."²¹³

Profoundly influenced by the *Naturphilosophie* of Paracelsus, in particular by the doctrine of the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm and by the principle of the interdependence of the two essential polarities, as well as by the development of Paracelsus's ideas in new discoveries in the field of magnetism and electricity, Oetinger emphasized the relationship of Böhme's mysticism with this tradition, which contrasted the dynamism of the natural world with the dead rigidity of mechanism.²¹⁴ At the same time, his interpretation of *Theosophia Revelata* reflects an interest in the cabalistic tradition²¹⁵ and the religious approach promoted by pietism, which spread in German through the formation of small communities from the final years of the seventeenth century.²¹⁶ It has also been shown that the work of Paracelsus and the writings of Böhme were both read with interest in pietist circles.²¹⁷

As already demonstrated in the portrayal of Böhme by the pietist Gottfried Arnold in his *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie (Impartial History of the Church and the Heretics)*, pietism and Böhme's mysticism find two fundamental points of contact. First of all, the call for pietist communities to preserve the vitality of religion, avoiding the fossilization encountered – without distinction – by all religions of the Book, reflects a theme dear to Böhme and to spiritualists (from Franck to Weigel) of the opposition between the Church alive and the Church made of stone (*Mauerkirche*). At the same time, the interest in scientific experimentation, widespread among pietists, can be regarded as the expression of one and the same approach, which aims to preserve the vitality and spirituality of nature from the 'mortifying' attacks of official science.²¹⁸ Secondly, pietism preaches the expectation

²¹³Letter to Stransky (Munich, 24 July 1838), in von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 5, 572: "Ich kenne aber seit Oetinger Niemand, der J. Böhme verstand oder versteht". Baader's disciple J. Hamberger also expresses himself in similar terms in the preface to his own edition of Oetinger's *Biblisches Wörterbuch* (cf. Oetinger (1849), ix).

²¹⁴Wollgast (1976), 166–167. See also Wallmann (2005), 231: "In Waldorf begann Oetinger, sich ein chemisches Laboratorium einzurichten und zu experimentieren. Die von Westeuropa vordringende mechanistische Naturwissenschaft ablehnend, suchte er Anschluß an die Tradition der Alchemie, beschaffte sich die Schriften von Paracelsus, Johann Baptist van Helmont, aber auch von Isaac Newton, dessen die Theologie respektierende Naturlehre er vor der Leibnizschen Philosophie den Vorzug gab. Begierig sammelte er alle Nachrichten über naturwissenschaftliche Experimente und Entdeckungen, bis hin zu Magnetismus und Elektrizität. 'Die Chemie und die Theologie sind bei mir nicht zwei sondern ein Ding.'"

²¹⁵On Oetinger's education and his study of the cabala, cf. Oetinger (1999), 27.

²¹⁶On the origins of pietism, see Jung (2005), in particular 3.

²¹⁷Cf. Minder (1974), 206. In this respect Minder recalls that a *Konsistorialreskript* was issued in 1746 banning meetings in *conventicula sub specie pietatis*; but the edict was aimed in particular at certain *Schwärmer* who were regarded as followers of Böhme (cf. *ibid.*, 130).

²¹⁸Cf. Minder (1974), 85–86 and 103. In this respect see also Bornkamm (1926), 16, which points also to the connection between pietism and the Protestant mystical tradition: "Denn der Pietismus hat zwei Hauptwurzeln: 1. die reichen Motive der protestantischen Mystik, die Forderung wahrer Wiedergeburt, die Christusinnigkeit, die Liebesmystik zwischen Seele und Christus, die Zustände

of a period of spiritual revolution (but not the end of the world), which will coincide with the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth and strongly resembles that period of rebirth to which Böhme had given the name *Lilienzeit*, the time of lilies. It is therefore no surprise that Oetinger, a member of the pietist community of Zinzendorf,²¹⁹ regarded Jakob Böhme as a “prophet of our time”²²⁰ who announced the imminent and total change of the world, and also pointed to the discovery of hidden possibilities in the natural world. In this sense, Oetinger is perhaps the first to combine the study of chemical alchemy with biblical exegesis, following what in his judgment was the example of the mystical cobbler. On this earth, between messianic expectations and experiments in chemical alchemy (or between “theology and electricity”, to use the terminology of Benz),²²¹ Oetinger studies the thought of Jakob Böhme, who takes his place in this respect alongside the Old Testament prophets, as a new prophet who announces and prepares the moment of rebirth that awaits the human race.²²²

From Baader's point of view, Oetinger and Saint-Martin represent almost the obligatory route for every reader of Böhme. In various letters, Baader calls Böhme “mein Meister”,²²³ as a demonstration that the theosophical vision of Saint-Martin and the pietist framework of Oetinger play an important role in his reception of Böhme's mysticism: for Baader as well, the cobbler is a religious and prophetic figure, a *theosophist*,²²⁴ and above all a spiritual master. Given the importance of this interpretative tradition of Böhme's mysticism as a term of comparison in understanding the difference and peculiarity of Hegel's interpretation, I would like once again to emphasize one key point: Baader confronts the reading of Böhme through a specific filter, the work of Saint-Martin; alongside this first aspect is his

der Verzückerung und Erleuchtung, die Gemeinschaftsbildung in engen, ernsten Gruppen usw. und 2. die Reformbewegungen innerhalb der Orthodoxie.”

²¹⁹Cf. the introduction by T. Griffero to Oetinger (1999), 27.

²²⁰Cf. Piepmeier (1978), 55. Here I can mention the fact that Oetinger considered Swedenborg, alongside Luther and Böhme, to be a fundamental prophetic figure. It was thanks to Oetinger that the writings of Swedenborg – already described by Kant as “die wildesten Hirngespinnste des ärgsten Schwärmers” – spread in Germany (cf. G. Bürke (1958), 51).

²²¹Benz (1970), 27 et seq., describes Oetinger as a “elektrische[r] Theologie”.

²²²Cf. Wallmann (2005), 233: “Oetinger sammelt die Bezeugungen natürlicher Gotteserkenntnis aus den verdrängten Randströmungen der Neuzeit (J. Böhme, Kabbala, Alchemie u. a.) zur Vorbereitung auf jene vollkommene Erkenntnis, die für das Ende der Zeiten geweissagt ist”. Stoeffler (1973), in particular 109–113, considered the effect of Böhme upon Oetinger (though not in a very consistent manner). Certain factors relating to Oetinger's reception of Böhme's thought are summarized in Großmann (1979), 59 et seq.

²²³By way of example see von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 5, 267 (letter from Baader to von Stransky, 19 July 1815) and 268 (letter from Baader to Schubert, 20 July 1815). In the introduction to the second volume of *Fermenta cognitionis*, Böhme is described significantly as “Reformator der Religionswissenschaft” (FC, vol. 2, 199).

²²⁴Cf. Procesi Xella (1976), 559: Baader does not regard Böhme as a *mystic*, but rather as a *theosophist*.

experimentation in the field of animal magnetism (with the revival of Paracelsus's conception of nature) and his growing interest in Oetinger.²²⁵

This approach to Böhme's mysticism was fairly widely broadcast, also by Baader himself. In the same way that Sailer had advised Baader to study Saint-Martin, Baader in turn recommends the reading of the French theosophist to his friend G. H. von Schubert, an expert in animal magnetism and author of a book entitled *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* (*Views from the Night-Side of Natural Science*).²²⁶ Encouraged by Baader, Schubert would also translate Saint-Martin's *De l'esprit des choses*²²⁷ into German. A dialogue is thus created between Baader and Schubert on the question of the connection between animal magnetism, Paracelsus's *Naturphilosophie* and theosophy, where the writings of Jakob Böhme represent the focal point. In a letter dated 10 April 1815 – for example – Baader writes to tell his friend to study the writings of Paracelsus, “without which J. Böhme is for the most part not really comprehensible.”²²⁸ Only a few months earlier, Baader had told Schubert he wished to look after the publication of Saint-Martin's *Ministère de l'homme esprit* so as to “prepare the way” for an edition of Böhme's work.²²⁹ It is clear, therefore, that the points within which the correspondence between Baader and Schubert develop follow the interpretative tradition we have attempted to reconstruct in this section.

Nor is the question of pietism and the reception of Oetinger's writings extraneous to this picture: in Piepmeier's view, Baader, Schubert and Schelling represent the cornerstones of the nineteenth-century philosophical-theosophical reception of the theology close to pietism.²³⁰ More generally, Gundlach has suggested that Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* was itself a particularly favorable meeting point between pietism and animal magnetism, and for this reason various scholars connected to Schelling maintained relationships as much with pietist circles and theosophy as with research

²²⁵ The suggestion of a first contact between Baader and pietist literature (including perhaps also the writings of Oetinger) through Sailer has already been canvassed. A letter by Schelling to his father (see below in Chap. 1, footnote 243) shows however that in 1806 Baader did not yet have the complete works of Oetinger.

²²⁶ Cf. *Biographie Baader's nebst Nachrichten über seine Familie*, in von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 5, 42.

²²⁷ Cf. Hammoud (1994), 131, where it is also stated that Schubert had read Böhme's writings at the age of twenty-three: in this case, his encounter with the works of Saint-Martin supplemented his understanding of Böhman mysticism but didn't mark its beginning, as it did for Baader.

²²⁸ von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 5, 259: “Ich bin nun mit dem Studium von Paracelsus Schriften beschäftigt, ohne die man wirklich J. Böhme grösstentheils nicht versteht.”

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 257 (the letter is dated 27 January 1815): “Um der Herausgabe J. Böhme's doch einigen Weg zu bahnen, bin ich entschlossen, St. Martins *Ministère de l'homme esprit* mit Anmerkungen herauszugeben.”

²³⁰ Piepmeier (1978), 10. However, as Piepmeier himself recognizes, the absence of direct references to Oetinger in Schelling's work poses no small problem for supporters of the famous theory according to which the pietist tradition exercised a clear influence on Schelling and Hegel during the time of their stay at Tübingen. I will be considering this important and controversial aspect in more detail in the next chapter.

on the applications of animal magnetism.²³¹ Gundlach names among others Justinus Kerner, a doctor influenced by Schelling's approach to *Naturphilosophie* and author of a paper known as *Die Seherin von Prevorst* (*The Seer of Prevorst*), which describes a borderline case between illness and mystical-magnetic experience.²³² The sources of Kerner's writing are in fact – as Bürke has emphasized – Schelling, Eschenmayer, Ennemoser, Schubert, Görres, but also and above all “Paracelsus, Jakob Böhme, Swedenborg, St. Martin, Novalis and other theosophists.”²³³ Not surprisingly Kerner's writing is dedicated to Schubert himself, who at Nuremburg (where, through Schelling, he had obtained an appointment as rector of the local *Realinstitut*) he had become friendly with G. M. Burger, a reader of Böhme and follower of Oetinger and Bengel.

In this respect, the title of Schubert's work, *Views from the Night-Side of Natural Science*, provides a further important indication as to how mysticism and *Naturphilosophie* had come together. This “nocturnal side” of *Naturwissenschaft*, where natural science encounters an unknown boundary, a *mystical* dimension (in the sense that we have described in this section) was of interest to various leading members of the Munich Academy. Also linked to the Munich group, alongside Schubert, Baader and Schelling, were Görres and Eschenmayer. Their enthusiasm for animal magnetism and at the same time the rediscovery of the German mystical tradition, where Böhme had a central role, certainly represent the bases for what can be described, with certain provisos, as almost a joint research project. It is no coincidence therefore that Görres, for example, began to take an interest in mysticism and theosophy during his years in Munich, where he came to know Baader.²³⁴ Görres and Schubert also met in Munich, where they realized they shared not only an interest in animal magnetism but also in its interpretation within a context of mystical revelation.²³⁵

According to Fuhrmans, Schelling himself, an intimate friend of Schubert, had become more interested in theosophy and in studying Böhman mysticism (with which he had first had contact, as previously stated, during his time in Jena) during his early years in Munich, when, having abandoned the Romantic conception of nature, he *plunged* himself into the study of the irrational, dynamic and nocturnal side of the natural world.²³⁶ In an attempt to get the new quarto edition of *Theosophia*

²³¹ Gundlach (2000), vol. 4, 320.

²³² The complete title of J. Kerner's essay is significant: *Die Seherin von Prevorst: Eröffnungen über das innere Leben des Menschen und über das Hereinragen einer Geisterwelt in die unsere* (Kerner (1829)).

²³³ Bürke (1958), 165.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

²³⁶ Schelling (1962), vol. 1, 356: “Diese ersten Jahre in München sind die große Wende seines Denkens geworden. In den vielberedeten Wandlungen des Schellingschen Denkens gibt es letzthin nur diese eine, die wie eine Scheide ist. [...] an die Stelle einer gotterfüllten, schönheitsglänzenden, Goetheschen Welt, deren Mitte eine geistdurchwirkte Natur war, trat die Welt einer *christlichen bestimmten Theosophie*, trat Böhmes abgründige Welt, darin Welt und Sein zu einem Dunkel-Abgründigen wurde, tief ins Irrationale reichend und ins Dynamisch-Nächtige.” For a chronology

Revelata, Schelling wrote to Schubert asking him to find out whether any Nuremberg antiquarian had a copy, and assuring him he was ready to pay any price to obtain a copy (he had once owned one, he added, but had given it to Baader).²³⁷ Thus there seems to have been a network: Schelling, Schubert and Baader shared an interest in Böhme: they exchanged copies of *Theosophia Revelata* or asked each other for help in finding them, given that these were rare books; and they also shared an interest in experimenting on the “nocturnal side” of natural philosophy.

Schelling's interest in the alchemical tradition, and in the *enthusiastic* approach of alchemists to the study of nature, would have come directly from his encounter with Baader.²³⁸ As Kirchhoff had already suggested, the meeting with Baader in Munich, where Schelling became a member of the *Akademie der Wissenschaften* in 1806,²³⁹ led Schelling to want to study the mystical-theosophical tradition: it was the same context as described above, where the theosophical interpretation of Jakob Böhme's mysticism was brought into contact with experimentation on the extraordinary phenomenon of animal magnetism.²⁴⁰ According to W. Schultz, Schelling's thought during this period was directed, under the influence of Böhme and Baader (but also, and above all, of Böhman mysticism *as interpreted by Baader*), toward a form of “theosophical pantheism”.²⁴¹

In addition, the writings of Oetinger, which represent another key element in the tradition of Böhme's reception that we have outlined, provide a further link between Schelling and Baader.²⁴² While Schelling was introduced by Baader to the reading of Böhme in the context of his experimentation on the dark side of nature, likewise Baader came into contact with Oetinger's writings through Schelling. In a letter written to his father dated 7 September 1806, Schelling asks him to obtain a complete edition of the works of Oetinger on behalf of Baader, “a very learned man and a

of Schelling's encounter with the work of Böhme – where the period of his stay in Munich and his encounter with Baader are most probably of key importance – see also Brown (1977), 114–116.

²³⁷ Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 162: “Haben Sie sich in Nürnberg noch nicht mit Antiquaren in Verbindung gesetzt? Sollte Ihnen da je die Quartausgabe von J. Böhme aufstoßen und Sie diese nicht etwa für sich nehmen, so bitte ich Sie selbige, um welchen Preis es sei, gleich für mich zu erstehen. Ich hatte diese Ausgabe, schenkte sie an Baadern, der schon so lange darnach geschmachtet hatte; nun vermisse ich sie aber doch.” (Schelling to Schubert, 27 May 1809).

²³⁸ Cf. Baumgardt (1927), 232. See also Kirchhoff (1982), 43.

²³⁹ It is known that the friendship between Schelling and Baader deteriorated over subsequent years, so that when Schelling was called to the University of Munich in 1827, the two were no longer in close contact (cf. for example Hoffmann (1857), vol. 5, 113). I am therefore referring here just to the first meeting between Schelling and Baader in Munich in 1806.

²⁴⁰ Kirchhoff (1982), 43–44.

²⁴¹ Höffe and Pieper (1995), 5, which quotes from Schultz (1975), 13. See also Fuhrmans (1954), 286: The interpretation of Fuhrmans, centered on the suggestion of an “almost slave-like dependence” by Schelling on Böhme (cf. *ibid.*, 325) has been criticized for example by H. H. Holz, who has rejected the idea that theosophy and pietism had a significant influence on Schelling's thought. In this respect see Iber (1994), 250.

²⁴² Marquet (1973), 572 suggests that Oetinger played an important role in Schelling's reception of Böhme's philosophy. On the relationship between Baader and Schelling so far as the study of theosophy cf. *ibid.*, 573.

great lover of mystical and theosophical writings".²⁴³ Baader was therefore turning to Schelling, whose family had close ties with the Swabian pietist tradition,²⁴⁴ in order to deepen his knowledge of Oetinger: Schelling's request to his father in fact relates to the theosophist's *complete* work, but Baader had certainly already come across Oetinger's thought through the writings of Saint-Martin.

A further figure has to be added to this network that formed the background of a popular interpretation of Böhme's mysticism between 1700 and 1800: Carl Eschenmayer, a disciple of Schelling, to whom Baader addressed the second part of *Über Ekstase (On Ecstasy)*, (which discusses the link between *Magnes* and *Magie*), and whose involvement in the research on animal magnetism through the publication of the *Archiv* has already been mentioned. Eschenmayer was praised by Baader for his work on the energy poles that characterize magnetic and electrical force,²⁴⁵ to Baader himself, described as a "deeply insightful friend of magnetism", Eschenmayer dedicated a comment in the pages of the *Archiv*.²⁴⁶ In 1803, influenced by the development of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, Eschenmayer published an essay entitled *Die Philosophie in ihrem Übergange zur Nichtphilosophie* which, according to Baumgardt, played a fundamental role in bringing Schelling closer to a certain interpretation of mysticism and theosophy.²⁴⁷

On the basis of these first, outline considerations it can be said that in all cases cited – from Baader to Schubert, up to Schelling and his followers Görres and Eschenmayer – the interest in *Naturphilosophie*, together with the rediscovery of the theosophical tradition, expresses the desire to investigate that nocturnal side of natural science that had already fascinated the Romantics.²⁴⁸ In particular, Böhme's mysticism provides an immense source of fascination for these scholars attached to the Munich Academy.²⁴⁹ In this context, the rediscovery of Böhme stands at a point of contact and fusion between a certain approach to natural science and a return to the classic themes of theosophy, from Oetinger to Saint-Martin: *Naturphilosophie* and theosophy meet and merge, one into the other.²⁵⁰

Both the interpretation of Böhme's mysticism proposed by Baader, as well as that put forward by Schelling – to cite the two most relevant cases mentioned in this section – must, of course, be considered also in the way they developed and in their

²⁴³ Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 101: "Mein Freund, der hiesige Geh. Rath Baader, ein sehr gelehrter Mann und großer Liebhaber mystischer und theosophischer Schriften ist auch denen unsres Oetinger auf die Spur gekommen und möchte sie gerne sämmtlich haben. Er hat mich ersucht, sie ihm wo möglich aus dem Württembergischen zu verschaffen, und ich habe es versprochen, in Hoffnung auf Ihre Güte."

²⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, vol. 1, 4, where Plitt suggests that Schelling's father can be regarded as a "disciple of Bengel in a broad sense", whereas his uncle Faber was a follower of Oetinger.

²⁴⁵ Baumgardt (1927), 204.

²⁴⁶ Eschenmayer et al. (1817–1824), vol. 3, part 1, 3.

²⁴⁷ Baumgardt (1927), 233.

²⁴⁸ See Schelling (1962), vol. 1, 542.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 357.

²⁵⁰ Fuhrmans (*ibid.*, 358) summarizes: "Naturphilosophie in ihrer ganzen Umfassendheit schien notwendig *Theosophie* sein zu müssen."

overall complexity, and cannot be reduced to the brief references made here.²⁵¹ Nevertheless, I have sought to highlight how it is possible to identify certain common points of approach to Böhme's writing held by a group of readers who also shared a series of well-defined parallel interests, above all an interest in animal magnetism. The elements that provide the context for the interpretation I have reconstructed (the link with Paracelsus, the parallel with Saint-Martin's theosophy, the inclusion into the theory of magnetism and the revival of Oetinger-style pietism), are the exact key points for Hegel's criticism of certain aspects of Böhme's mysticism – but above all of some of the shoemaker's interpreters.

On completing this historical reconstruction, which is essential for understanding the following sections into which this work is divided, we will now examine the specific case of Hegel's interpretation, and consider a suggested chronology for his study of *Theosophia Revelata*.

3 The Historical Context of Hegel's Encounter with *Theosophia Revelata*

In the previous section it was shown how the reception of Böhme's mysticism between 1700 and 1800 was filtered through the channels of animal magnetism and the pietist tradition. The factors that came together to form this background – where animal magnetism combined with the theories of Paracelsus, the pietism of Oetinger and the theosophy of Saint-Martin – will now be reconsidered one by one: it will be seen in fact that, in the case of Hegel, the reception of Böhme's mysticism did *not* pass through the filter of mesmerism, nor, still less, through that of pietism. Remaining on the level of historical reconstruction, it will therefore be shown in this section that there was no interaction between Hegel's reading of *Theosophia Revelata* and the context described, which – as already stated – provided the background for other important nineteenth-century interpretations.

This section will be divided into two main parts, preceded by a study of the letters that passed between Hegel and van Ghert, essential for establishing the period of time over which Hegel encountered Böhme's writings. In the two sections that follow this introductory part, we will be giving separate consideration to Hegel's relationship with the theories of magnetism and the pietist tradition, in order to show how this fits (or *doesn't* fit) with his interpretation of Böhme's writings, and in a broader perspective, with Hegel's attempt – an attempt already under way in his earliest writings – to think about the very concept of mysticism. This section devoted

²⁵¹ For further discussion, see Koslowski (2001) who, in an analysis completely different to my own, develops the aspects of Böhme's mysticism which in his view were particularly relevant for readers of Baader, Schelling and Hegel (in particular cf. book 1, part 6, ch. 12: *Theosophie als Erkenntnis der Prinzipien göttlicher Offenbarung*).

to Hegel's history as a reader of Böhme will therefore seek to focus especially on the suggestion that the originality of Hegel's interpretation consists of not only, so to speak, a *constructive* phase – namely a series of new interpretative elements that Hegel proposes for the reading of *Theosophia Revelata* – but also and above all a preliminary phase that involves the effort of splitting Böhme's mysticism away from that context of mesmerism and theosophy discussed above. The *constructive* phase will be amply dealt with in the third chapter of this study, but its importance can only be understood if we consider what is not present in it and what Hegel had intentionally kept separate. In other words: the absence of references to mystical *clairvoyance* (about which Hegel was nevertheless interested) and to the theosophical pietist tradition is, due to its very absence, an important aspect of Hegel's interpretation of Jakob Böhme's mysticism.

Hegel's approach to the theories of animal magnetism has rarely been considered,²⁵² but is fundamentally important in this study for two main reasons: firstly because Hegel received his copy of Böhme's writings from an expert in mesmerism; and secondly, because Hegel's criticism of the supposed mysticism of the magnetized state makes it possible to anticipate the proposition that will be developed in detail from the next section onwards, namely the distinction between two different conceptions of *mysticism* in Hegel's writing. It is, in fact, Hegel's detailed criticism of magnetic ecstasy that makes it possible to understand why, from Hegel's point of view, Jakob Böhme's mysticism shares no common ground with the context of animal magnetism: it is, according to Hegel, a mystical experience of a completely different nature. This clear separation between Böhme and animal magnetism is in my view a shrewd and conscious interpretation by Hegel, and it becomes particularly important if we consider the fact that a certain connection between Böhme's mysticism and Mesmer's theories was regarded as absolutely natural between 1700 and 1800, as we have seen in the previous section.

Hegel's relationship with the pietist tradition poses questions of a different kind. Several studies have focused on the influence of pietism on the young Hegel,²⁵³ even though there is a lack of any conclusive evidence (in the writings of Hegel that survive, for example, the name of Oetinger never appears).²⁵⁴ Since the suggestion about Hegel's interest in pietism during the years at the *Stift* is often accompanied by the theory that the young philosopher showed a fondness for the mystics (and Eckhart in particular), this aspect will be examined in detail in the final part of this chapter.

²⁵² See M. J. Petry's careful studies on Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* and, in particular, Petry (1991).

²⁵³ The suggestion of a recognizable influence of pietism on the young Hegel and Schelling has been made by Schneider, whose book entitled *Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesahnen* (1938) has become a point of reference. This work will be further discussed later.

²⁵⁴ See also: Jamme (1983), 27–28.

3.1 *Magnetic 'Torpor' and Böhme's Speculation: The Reasons for a Missing Link*

3.1.1 The Correspondence Between Hegel and van Ghert

References to the theory of animal magnetism and Böhme's mysticism are found repeatedly in Hegel's correspondence with his Dutch former student at Jena, P. G. van Ghert.²⁵⁵ Yet Hegel's interest in Böhme's thought is only indirectly linked – through the questions posed by van Ghert in the correspondence – with the tradition that has been described in the previous section: unlike Baader and the earlier named members of the Munich Academy, the reading of Böhme's work in the case of Hegel was not accompanied by a fascination for the “nocturnal side” of *Naturphilosophie*, nor even less did this represent the channel through which he came into contact with Böhme's mysticism. Despite this – or rather, thanks to this significant absence of a direct relationship – the link between his discussions with van Ghert on animal magnetism and the references to Böhme in the correspondence are of fundamental help in showing in what way Hegel's interpretation of the cobbler's mysticism is to be distinguished, at the outset, from those of his contemporaries.

As already indicated, Hegel's personal copy of *Theosophia Revelata* had been sent to him from Amsterdam, where van Ghert had returned after his period of study at the University of Jena. The correspondence between the two is therefore the first incontrovertible evidence from which to begin reconstructing Hegel's reception of Böhme's philosophy from an historical point of view. The letter in which van Ghert announces that he has sent his former professor the two-volume 1715 edition of Böhme's complete works is dated 25 February 1811. Hegel replies on 29 July of the same year, thanking him for the gift: from this date, Hegel therefore has complete access to Böhme's writings. On 22 June of the previous year, van Ghert had written: “I don't know whether you have Jakob Böhme's collected works, and since these are very rare in Germany I would like to give you his luxury edition, 2 volumes in folio, as a memento. Please tell me sincerely whether and how I can send this to you.”²⁵⁶ It is no surprise that van Ghert offers to give Hegel a fine edition of Böhme's work that is particularly rare and hard to obtain in Germany. It is not until mid-October that Hegel sends the reply that van Ghert anxiously awaits.²⁵⁷ It reads: “I

²⁵⁵ In Hegel's correspondence (or rather the letters that survive) Böhme is named only in the exchange with van Ghert, except for a brief reference in a letter from Niethammer to Hegel dated 19 December 1804. This is a general comment, in a context that is not relevant to our study (cf. *Briefe* 1, 92).

²⁵⁶ *Briefe* 1, 317: “Ich weiß nicht, ob Sie Jakob Böhmes sämtliche Werke haben, und da diese in Deutschland sehr selten sind, möchte ich Ihnen zum Andenken gern seine Prachtausgabe, 2 Teile in Folio, schenken. Schreiben Sie mir daher aufrichtig, ob und wie ich Ihnen dieselbe schicken kann.”

²⁵⁷ In the meantime van Ghert had sent Hegel a second letter in which he summarized the content of the previous one, and asked once again whether or not the offer to donate “zum freundschaftlichen Andenken” a copy of *Theosophia Revelata* would be appreciated (cf. *Briefe* 1, 324).

accept with warmest thanks your nice present of the folio edition of J. Böhme's writings. I had already wished for a long time to acquire the complete collection of his works. I am twice as happy to receive such an excellent edition and to receive it from your generosity."²⁵⁸

Though Hegel states here that he had wanted to own a copy of Böhme's writings for some time, in the letter in which he tells van Ghert that he has finally received the two volumes, he adds: "Finally your good intention has been realized, and Jakob Böhme together with the other enclosures has reached me safely. I send you my warmest thanks for this nice gift, a memento of friendship. It has delighted me: the edition and the copy are excellent. Now I can study Jakob Böhme more precisely than before, since I did not own his writings".²⁵⁹

Several references to Böhme in his *Wastebook* show that Hegel had had earlier contact with the shoemaker's mysticism during his years at Jena – and this is no surprise, considering that the rediscovery of Böhme began in that city where the famous circle of Romantics met. We will be returning later to examine these Jena fragments in detail; but I'd like to point out immediately the importance of this letter, in which Hegel declares (in the summer of 1811, 4 years after leaving Jena) that he wishes to carry out a more careful, precise (*genauer*, in the original German) study of Böhme's writings, which had not been possible until then, due to his lack of a personal copy. It could therefore be expected that 1811 would mark a watershed in Hegel's relationship with Böhme's mysticism, and that there would be a clear evolution from that date on.

Let us now return to the first of the letters mentioned (van Ghert to Hegel, 22 June 1810). In 1810, van Ghert had already been interested for several months in animal magnetism and had been using it on a sick patient. The passage quoted, in which van Ghert offers to send a copy of *Theosophia Revelata*, proceeds with a discontinuity as follows:

I have been magnetizing a relative of mine for half a year [...]. But since I can't remember the concept regarding animal magnetism that you gave us in the natural philosophy, and the experiments that Nordhoff, K. E. Schelling and others produce are not very scientific, you would do me an extraordinary favor if you were to tell me what is necessary. Primarily I would like to know what you think of sight at a distance. If the patient were not so calm and relaxed during her crisis I would attribute this to her imagination, but now I can't explain this to myself. Even if she sometimes sees completely wrongly, it still often happens that she gives a very good description of objects which are a few miles away and of which she knows nothing when she is awake...She says that a current of light goes from the person who asks to the object in question, and through this she sees it. But she demands that the

²⁵⁸ *Briefe* 1, 330: "Ihr schönes Geschenk der Folioausgabe von J. Böhmes Schriften nehme ich mit dem herzlichsten Danke an; ich hatte schon lange gewünscht, in den Besitz der ganzen Sammlung seiner Werke zu kommen; es freut mich doppelt, eine so vorzügliche Ausgabe und sie von Ihrer Güte zu erhalten."

²⁵⁹ *Werke* 19.1, 315 (cf. *Briefe* 1, 381): "Endlich ist Ihre gütige Absicht erreicht, und Jakob Böhm sammt den andern Beilagen mir wohlbehalten zugekommen. Ich statue Ihnen für diß schöne Geschenk des Andenkens und der Freundschaft meinen herzlichen Dank ab; es hat mich sehr erfreut; die Ausgabe und das Exemplar ist sehr vorzüglich. – Ich kann Jakob Böhm nun genauer studiren als vorher, weil ich nicht selbst im Besitz seiner Schriften war".

person asking should be very concentrated and she swears that she does not see the object when this is not the case. I hope that you won't be bothered that I interrupt your studies with such questions. Indeed it is only the love of science which gives me such audacity.²⁶⁰

Van Ghert asks Hegel to explain a phenomenon observed by him during the magnetic treatment, namely the extraordinary capacity of the magnetized somnambulant to see and recognize very distant objects. Even though van Ghert doesn't explicitly use the word *clairvoyant*, it is clear that the reference is precisely to that state of somnambulism that the authors referred to in the previous section described as *Hellsehen* or *clairvoyance*. This is an unexplainable phenomenon for which, however, van Ghert is looking for a *scientific* answer that he cannot find in the writings of Nordhoff and K. E. Schelling. Van Ghert speaks of *Krise* (reminiscent of the observations of Wienholt), but the condition of perfect calm in the magnetized patient suggests that the phenomenon is not to be ascribed to pure and simple fantasy (*Phantasie*). There is no relationship, as we can see, between these considerations and the reference to Böhme, namely the copy of his works that van Ghert is ready to send, except for the fact that animal magnetism and Böhmanian mysticism are connected in the interests of the Dutch student – a connection that is not coincidental.

This letter marks the beginning of a correspondence between Hegel and van Ghert that concerns a discussion of the most controversial aspects of animal magnetism, where the references to the dispatch of *Theosophia Revelata* always run parallel to this discussion, but remain in the background. The problem of a penetration of Böhme's mysticism into Mesmer's theory is never tackled, even though van Ghert declares significantly in one of the last letters on this question: "mysticism appears to be expanding more and more in Germany through natural science, and this surely damages the propagation of philosophy among those who don't know its spirit."²⁶¹ According to van Ghert, mysticism (where the word *mysticism* refers without doubt to the context outlined in the previous section of this study) was spreading in Germany through the channels of natural science, and this combination

²⁶⁰ *Briefe* 1, 317: "Seit 1/2 Jahr magnetisiere ich eine meiner Anverwandten [...]. Da ich mich aber des Begriffs, den Sie uns in der Naturphilosophie vom tierischen Magnetismus gegeben, nicht erinnern kann, und die Versuche, welche Nordhoff, K.E. Schelling und andere darüber geben, nicht sehr wissenschaftlich sind, würden Sie mir einen außerordentlichen Wohlgefallen tun, wenn Sie mir das Nötige mitteilen wollen. Vornehmlich wünschte ich wohl zu wissen, was Sie vom Sehen in die Entfernung halten. Wenn die Kranke während ihrer Krise nicht so ruhig und gelassen wär, würde ich dies ihrer Phantasie zuschreiben; nun aber weiß ich mir dies nicht zu erklären. Obwohl sie bisweilen ganz falsch sieht, geschieht es aber auch mehrmals, daß sie eine sehr gute Beschreibung von Gegenständen, die einige Meilen entfernt sind und wovon sie im wachenden Zustande gar nichts weiß, gibt...Es geht, sagt sie, aus dem Fragenden ein Lichtstrom nach dem gefragten Gegenstand, wodurch sie ihn sieht. Sie fordert aber dabei, daß der Fragende sehr attent sei und versichert, nichts zu sehen, wenn er dies nicht ist. Ich hoffe, daß Sie es mir nicht übel nehmen werden, daß ich Ihre Studien durch solche Fragen unterbreche; denn es ist nur die Liebe zur Wissenschaft, die mir diese Dreistigkeit gibt."

²⁶¹ Van Ghert to Hegel, 12 June 1818, in *Briefe* 2, 191: "Der Mystizismus scheint in Deutschland sich über die Naturwissenschaften mehr und mehr auszubreiten, was gewiß der Fortpflanzung der Philosophie bei denjenigen, welche ihren Geist nicht kennen, schadet."

was damaging the development of a philosophical approach to the problem of animal magnetism. To deal with this situation, van Ghert urges Hegel to express a view on these matters: he writes in the same letter that, in order to say something substantial on animal magnetism, Hegel's opinion would be invaluable.²⁶² Hoping to arouse Hegel's interest in animal magnetism, and to obtain some clarification in this respect, van Ghert sets out in detail, over a period of at least eight years (1810–1818), his opinions about the new publications that appear from time to time on animal magnetism. In a letter of 1814, for example, by which time he was an experienced magnetizer,²⁶³ van Ghert asks his former professor whether he has already read Kluge's *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus* (*Attempt at a Presentation of Animal Magnetism*), whose attempt at cataloguing the theory of mesmerism marked a crucial turning-point for all who were studying the subject.²⁶⁴

Hegel's replies to van Ghert's questions certainly don't show the same degree of interest in animal magnetism as that which emerges from the letters of the Dutchman. So far as the phenomenon of the distant vision of the somnambulant, Hegel expresses a view six months after receiving van Ghert's request (justifying the delay by saying it was his intention to study the question so as to give an adequate reply).²⁶⁵ This is a first, provisional interpretation of the working of magnetic treatment: Hegel himself admits he hasn't sufficiently studied the problem,²⁶⁶ and concludes by stating that the task of proving its correctness is upon van Ghert, who, so to speak, is concerned with the practical application of the theory. There is, in any case, a clear attempt by Hegel to provide a physiological explanation of the strange phenomena linked to somnambulism, even if the relationships and laws of physiology seem to disappear in this "obscure region of the organic relation".²⁶⁷ The theory put forward by Hegel is the following:

To give my opinion briefly, it seems to me in general that it is effective in such cases where there emerges a sick isolation on the side of sensibility, e.g. also rheumatism, and that its

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Van Ghert to Hegel, 4 October 1814, in *Briefe* 2, 40.

²⁶⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Briefe* 1, 328: "Der erstere [Brief] hatte mich aufgefordert, Ihnen über den tierischen Magnetismus meine Ansicht zu schreiben; der Wunsch, diesem Ihrem Verlangen auf eine befriedigende Art zu entsprechen und Ihnen meine Gedanken weitläufig auseinander zu setzen, hatte mich bewogen, eine Zeit von Muße abzuwarten, die ich aber noch nicht finden konnte."

²⁶⁶ We can suppose that Hegel was aware of the new studies on animal magnetism also through the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (on which, as seen earlier, many works on this subject were reviewed). See HL, 48.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Hegel to van Ghert, 15 October 1810, in *Werke* 19.1, 278–279 (cf. *Briefe* 1, 329): "Es hat mich interessiert, daß Sie sich mit dem Magnetismus beschäftigen; diese dunkle Region des organischen Verhältnisses scheint mir auch darum große Aufmerksamkeit zu verdienen, weil die gemeinen physiologischen Ansichten darin verschwinden; gerade seine Einfachheit halte ich für das Merkwürdigste, denn das Einfache pflegt immer für etwas Dunkles ausgegeben zu werden. Auch der Fall, in welchem Sie den Magnetismus angewendet, war eine Stockung in den höhern Systemen des Lebenprozesses."

effect consists in the sympathy in which one animal individuality may come into contact with another, to the extent that the sympathy of the individuality with itself, its fluidity in itself, is interrupted and blocked. Such unification brings life back to its general penetrating current. The general idea that I have about this is that magnetism belongs to the simple, general life, which as the vapor of life in general, unseparated in particular systems, organs and their special effectiveness, behaves and manifests itself as one simple soul, whereby are connected somnambulism and in general those manifestations, which, otherwise linked to certain organs, can here be carried out by others almost promiscuously.²⁶⁸

At the centre of Hegel's interpretation is the concept of *sympathy* (*Sympathie*):²⁶⁹ the sympathetic relationship established between magnetizer and patient is seen in terms of a *Vereinigung*, a unification or fusion of the two poles, subject and object, through which the life flow is put in movement and the curative effect is obtained. Magnetism, and the treatment based on it, is accordingly one of the basic expressions of the life of organisms, and for this reason it is "the vapor of life". Somnambulism and the phenomena associated with it must also be interpreted in this context, namely as the revelation of that magnetic life force that is generally linked to individual bodies, and which is released and brought to expression through the work of the magnetizer. This interpretation is consciously presented as a conjecture; and yet van Ghert's letter of 22 June 1810 shows that Hegel must have already presented his ideas on animal magnetism in his Jena lectures (van Ghert in fact asks for explanations since he cannot remember the "concept regarding animal magnetism" that Hegel had given "in the natural philosophy").²⁷⁰ In the *Encyclopedia* (paragraphs 405–406, to which we will return later) Hegel puts forward a more detailed theory about the working of magnetic treatment, but the basic ideas (namely, that animal magnetism is one of the simpler expressions of organic life, and that mesmerism acts to create a sense of cohesion) are also maintained thereafter.

So far as the correspondence with van Ghert, it continues on 25 February 1811 with a letter of thanks from the Dutchman for the explanation of animal magnetism,²⁷¹ and hoping that Hegel would write in further detail on the question. Hegel replies on

²⁶⁸ *Werke* 19.1, 279 (cf. *Briefe* 1, 329–330): "Um meine Meinung kurz zu sagen, so scheint er mir überhaupt in solchen Fällen wirksam, wo ein krankhaftes Isoliren in der Seite der Sensibilität, z. B. auch Rheumatism, eintritt, und seine Wirkung in der Sympathie zu bestehen, in die eine animalische Individualität mit einer andern zu treten vermag, in sofern die Sympathie derselben mit sich selbst, ihre Flüssigkeit in sich, unterbrochen und gehemmt ist. Jene Vereinigung führt das Leben wieder in seinen durchdringenden allgemeinen Strom zurück. Die allgemeine Idee, die ich davon habe, ist, daß der Magnetismus dem einfachen allgemeinen Leben angehört, das sich dabei als der Duft des Lebens überhaupt, ungesondert in besondere Systeme, Organe und deren specielle Wirksamkeit, als eine einfache Seele verhält und manifestirt, womit der Somnambulism und überhaupt die Aeusserungen zusammenhängen, die sonst an gewisse Organe gebunden, hier von andern fast *promiscue* verrichtet werden können."

²⁶⁹ It is worth noting that in a letter dated 12 April 1812, van Ghert recommends to Hegel the text by F. Hufeland entitled *Über Sympathie*, discussed in the previous section (cf. *Briefe* 1, 399).

²⁷⁰ See *Briefe* 1, 317–318. In this respect see Petry (1991), 264: "Aus dem Briefwechsel mit van Ghert wissen wir, daß er [Hegel] in den Vorlesungen von 1805/6 den animalischen Magnetismus wohl erörtert hat, aber welche exakte systematische Bedeutung er ihm zuschrieb, ist nicht bekannt."

²⁷¹ *Briefe* 1, 351.

29 July with a letter of crucial value from our point of view: he has received the copy of *Theosophia Revelata*, and thanks van Ghert with a brief comment about the essence and importance of Böhme's philosophy. The discussion about animal magnetism is therefore interrupted by a sort of digression onto Jakob Böhme.

The text of the letter, which survives in draft form and is therefore incomplete, gives a first glimpse of the basic lines of Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism. As we will see in the central sections of this study, some of the ideas put forward by Hegel in this letter already anticipate the themes of Hegel's interpretation of *Theosophia Revelata* in his Berlin *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, even if Hegel's approach to Böhme's writings will significantly change, above all in an increasing acceptance of Böhme's imaginative language. This letter is therefore evidence of a significant phase in Hegel's relationship with the mysticism of Böhme.

[...] his theosophy remains one of the most extraordinary attempts of a deep and yet uneducated man to grasp the most inward nature of the absolute being. For Germany he is of particular interest, since he is actually the first German philosopher. Considering the limited capability of his time and his own limited learning with respect to abstract thinking, his striving is the toughest struggle to bring into representation the deep speculative [element], which he has in his intuition, and at the same time to subdue the element of representation in such a way that the speculative [element] may be expressed in it. Therefore so little remains constant and firm in this, since he always feels the inadequacy of the representation to that which he wants [to express], and so turns it upside down again. And it is because this upturning of the absolute reflection is without determinate consciousness and without the form of the concept that such a great confusion appears. Apart from recognising the general depth of his foundational principles, it becomes difficult, or as it seems to me, impossible, to unravel anything which has to do with detail and determination.²⁷²

Böhme's theosophy takes the form, in his view, of an *attempt* (*Versuch*), and indeed one of the most extraordinary and peculiar attempts known in the history of philosophy. German philosophy – and this is a key point to which we must return – starts off with the philosophical experiment of Böhme's mysticism, so that Jakob Böhme can be described as the “first German philosopher” (or, as Hegel would say elsewhere, the “Teutonic philosopher”, or also “philosophus germanicus”).²⁷³ This is fundamentally important: not only is Böhme considered by Hegel to be a philosopher to all effects (not a *poet*, or a *Meister* in generic terms), but he is even introduced

²⁷² *Werke* 19.1, 315–316 (cf. *Briefe* 1, 381–382): “seine Theosophie ist immer einer der merkwürdigsten Versuche eines tiefen, jedoch ungebildeten Menschen, die innerste Natur des absoluten Wesens zu erfassen. – Für Deutschland hat er das besondere Interesse, daß er eigentlich der erste deutsche Philosoph ist. – Bey der wenigen Fähigkeit seiner Zeit, und bey seiner eigenen wenigen Bildung, abstrakt zu denken, ist sein Bestreben der härteste Kampf, das tiefe Spekulative, das er in seiner Anschauung hat, in die Vorstellung zu bringen, und zugleich das Element des Vorstellens so zu gewältigen, daß das Spekulative darin ausgedrückt werden könne. Es bleibt deswegen so wenig Stetes und Festes darin, weil er immer die Unangemessenheit der Vorstellung zu dem fühlt, was er will, und sie wieder umkehrt; wodurch, weil dieses Umkehren der absoluten Reflexion ohne bestimmtes Bewußtseyn und ohne die Begriffsform ist, eine so große Verwirrung erscheint. Es wird schwer, oder wie mir scheint, unmöglich seyn, außer der Anerkennung der allgemeinen Tiefe seiner Grundprincipien, das zu entwirren, was auf Detail und Bestimmtheit hingeht.”

²⁷³ Cf. Stieve (1825–1826), fol. 101v. The unpublished manuscript is held at the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Ref. Ms. Germ. Qu. 1319).

as the one who inaugurated the German philosophical tradition. This preference for the word *philosopher* would also be retained in later writings that name the author of *Theosophia Revelata*.

The way in which the profound yet uncultivated Jakob Böhme moves ahead by attempts is, according to Hegel, the prime characteristic of his thought; his great value resides here (as will become clear on reading his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*). The purpose toward which Böhme's theosophy tends is the understanding of the "most intimate nature of the absolute", a project about which Hegel makes no judgment as to his success or otherwise, but about which he points out the very powerful tension, the struggle (*Kampf*) that is generated by the desire of this uneducated man to use thought in order to grasp essence, the Absolute. In other words, Böhme's writings express the "toughest struggle", which concerns the effort of expressing in words and in images, or rather in representations (*Vorstellungen*), the speculative profundity of which the mystic has an intuition (*Anschaung*). This tension between the purity of speculative intuition and the need to express it is however, according to Hegel, only the first stage: the most extraordinary aspect of Böhme's attempt is the way in which he brings about this "translation" of speculative profundity into *Vorstellungen*. Hegel states that Böhme does violence (*gewältigen*, from the root *Gewalt*, *violence*) to the element of the representation, in such a way that this is able to express – one could also say *contain* – the speculative element. Böhme's violence is therefore to be found in the untiring imagination with which he creates new *Vorstellungen*, new expressions, aimed at communicating the speculative nucleus that lies at the root of mystical intuition. Böhme – suggests Hegel – *doesn't think in an abstract way*, but always through the use of *Vorstellungen*, in other words through a figured and non-conceptual language.

On this particular aspect of Böhme's expression, Hegel provides in this brief text only a few rapid indications that will be discussed again more widely in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, where he considers more closely the expressive capacity and limits of Böhme's language. In the draft letter to van Ghert, Hegel states only that Böhme turns the *Vorstellungen* upside down, in other words he creates them, uses them and then dissolves them once again as he becomes aware of the inadequacy of each of them to relate to the speculative profundity that ought to lead to the light. In this way he creates a violent tension between the speculative element and the means by which Böhme attempts to express it, or translate it, onto the page, namely the responsive representation, the metaphor.

The paradox of Böhme is to be found precisely here: he employs a multitude of images to communicate the intimate nature of the Absolute Being precisely because he realizes that each of them is inadequate for the purpose for which it was chosen. Here emerges one of the constant themes in Hegel's interpretation of *Theosophia Revelata*: Böhme does not possess the form of the concept (*Begriffsform*), which Hegel regards as the only one capable of communicating speculative profundity. But in Böhme's case this is not translated into an absence of language, into an apophatic silence, but rather into an extreme linguistic and expressive creativity, through which he brings into operation such a flurry of images that nothing in his writings remains *still, fixed* (*Stetes, Festes*).

Significantly, Hegel does not provide any example here of this struggle by Böhme between speculative essence and his communication. He refers to no particular *Vorstellung*, he doesn't name any words or expressions typical of Böhme's language that might explain to van Ghert the nature of this extreme creativity in giving life to innumerable, fleeting metaphorical representations. The subject of Böhme's language and its peculiarities – a subject that would become central in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (and not just there) – is not given any thematic context but merely mentioned. Even though this is a detail (and the text of the letter is, as already indicated, incomplete) it can certainly be suggested that the lack of direct examples taken from Böhme's language is due to the fact that Hegel didn't yet have a detailed knowledge of Böhme's writings.

The conclusion of this judgment of Hegel is particularly significant: Hegel recognizes the great profundity of Böhme's vision in its *Grundprinzipien*, but finds it “*difficult* or, as it seems to me, *impossible*” (my italics) to express a view on the details of such a philosophical conception, which seems to end up in “great confusion”.²⁷⁴ Whether it is *impossible*, or *possible but difficult*, to find one's way around Jakob Böhme's terminology is the crux of the problem that Hegel would tackle from 1811 onward.

The same letter of 29 July 1811 must also have contained various comments on animal magnetism which, however, have been lost along with the missing part of the text. On 12 April of the following year, van Ghert thanks Hegel “for the great explanation of Böhme's writings, as well as of animal magnetism,”²⁷⁵ contained in the abovementioned letter. It can therefore be supposed that the two themes of Böhme's mysticism and animal magnetism found no point of contact here either, but simply ran parallel, as in the other letters considered.

This very parallelism (and therefore the absence of a relationship) between these two discussions in the correspondence between Hegel and van Ghert is worthy of attention, and from here one can argue that Hegel's interpretation of Jakob Böhme's mysticism is deliberately based on completely different terrain from that represented by mesmerism and by theosophy, to which those readers named in the previous section had referred. In the case of Hegel, the lack of a connection between Böhme's mysticism and animal magnetism seems all the more relevant, considering that his edition of *Theosophia Revelata* had been given to him by someone who himself was an expert in mesmerism.

²⁷⁴ My interpretation is different to the view of H. S. Harris (recently also repeated by G. A. Magee), who considers there to be a clear influence of Böhme's mysticism on Hegel's thought from 1801, or even from around 1795, during that “theosophical phase” of which Rosenkranz speaks. The purpose of my work is to show how Hegel's relationship with Böhme's writings – a relationship that is not to be reduced to terms of *influence* – changes and evolves in later years, and that the Jena notes on Böhme (to which I will return below, Chap. 3, Sect. 1) represent in this picture only a starting point. As I have attempted to show in these pages, Hegel himself states that before 1811 there had been no close reading of *Theosophia Revelata* (cf. Harris (1983), 111, quoted by Magee (2001), 47–48).

²⁷⁵ *Briefe* 1, 399: “Ich bin Ihnen sehr verbunden für die herrliche Erklärung sowohl der Böhmeschen Schriften als auch vom animalischen Magnetismus”.

Hegel and van Ghert became acquainted, as already indicated, at Jena, a city where the rediscovery of Böhme in Germany had started, and highly important in relation to the first experiments in animal magnetism. It is therefore no surprise that Hegel – as van Ghert recalls – had earlier introduced the subject of animal magnetism into his Jena lectures on *Naturphilosophie*, nor that the first references to the cobbler's mysticism are to be found in those notes written during his years lecturing at Jena. This interweaving of the two themes into the correspondence therefore has its roots in the encounter between professor and student in that city on the river Saale, where the discussion on the concept of mysticism (which already interested the early Romantics) had found points of contact with the birth of a new *Naturphilosophie*.

The quoted extracts from Hegel's letters already give some glimpse of the direction in which Hegel's interpretation of animal magnetism and associated phenomena – in particular those controversial aspects often defined as *mystical* – would move in his writings of later years. To understand Hegel's criticism of the arcane tendency of mesmerism, and to clarify the importance of this same criticism in Hegel's formulation of a different conception of *mysticism*, we must look at paragraphs 405 and 406 of the *Encyclopedia*. When the first edition of the *Encyclopedia* was published, Hegel and van Ghert were still in correspondence; Hegel had also had the opportunity of studying the subject of mesmerism through van Ghert's own writings, which the latter had regularly sent him from Holland.²⁷⁶ Though Hegel wrote in his letters of 1810–1811 that he had not yet reached a satisfactory explanation for the working of animal magnetism, a clearer picture is presented in the *Encyclopedia*. Hegel had also now developed a clear opinion about mesmeric mysticism.

3.1.2 Animal Magnetism and *Hellsehen* in the *Encyclopedia*

Hegel's interpretation of mesmerism in the *Encyclopedia* is to be found under *Anthropology*, which opens the section in *Philosophy of the Spirit* devoted to *Subjective Spirit* (*Der subjektive Geist*).²⁷⁷ In particular, Hegel devotes paragraph 406 to a long discussion on mesmeric theory, while in the previous paragraph, with its important *Zusatz* (addendum), Hegel considers the notion of *Magie*. We will return later to paragraph 405 and the connection between animal magnetism and magic; the controversial subject of magnetic sleep is examined, in fact, in the following paragraph, from which my study will therefore begin.

Magnetic somnambulism (“and related states”) is, according to Hegel, a *sick* condition,²⁷⁸ in which “the individual stands in an *immediate* relation to the concrete content of itself, and has its considerate consciousness of itself and of the intellectual

²⁷⁶ On Hegel's sources on animal magnetism, see Petry (1991), 261.

²⁷⁷ Relating to the role of animal magnetism in the lectures (Hegel gave lectures on anthropology at Heidelberg and at Berlin) and on the points of contact with the presentation of the same theory in the *Encyclopedia*, *ibid.*, 260.

²⁷⁸ Cf. *Werke* 7.2, 162 (cf. TWA 10, 132).

correlation of the world as a condition distinct from it – *magnetic somnambulism* and related states.”²⁷⁹ The reasons why Hegel deals with the discussion of animal magnetism in this section of the *Encyclopedia* already become clear in this passage. In the case of the magnetic somnambulant, the problem of the subject-object relationship, which is the key element in Hegel's anthropology,²⁸⁰ tilts to the side of subjectivity. The magnetized subject relates in an *immediate* manner; the consciousness under consideration doesn't arise in this *perceptive* way – where the verb *fühlen*, to *perceive* (from which is derived *Gefühl*, *feeling*) has a fundamental role in this context. Given that the rational consciousness is not the subject of the action, this is not a conscious but a subconscious state, and in this sense magnetic sleep strongly resembles the condition induced by lunacy (*Verrücktheit*). In both cases there is an unbalancing toward the inwardness of the subject, as a “sinking of the individual life into itself” (to use an expression that appears in the *Zusatz* to paragraph 406).²⁸¹

So far as abandonment of the faculty of reasoning, Hegel adds a little later that anyone wishing to interest himself in the “extraordinary [*merkwürdig*] state principally produced by animal magnetism”, must not allow himself to remain closed within the categories of the intellect, since what we see with our eyes during mesmeric therapy is hard to believe, and even harder to comprehend.²⁸² Magnetic treatment, in short, causes a regression into the dark and a-rational part of the patient's unconscious, which is difficult to penetrate even with philosophical speculation. The magnetic cure, just as much as the formulation of a possible *scientific* explanation for it (as van Ghert was asking in the correspondence with Hegel), are processes that move along a fine boundary – between conscious and subconscious, between observation of the facts and impossibility of finding an unequivocal interpretation.

Despite this interpretative difficulty, to which Hegel had earlier referred in his letters to van Ghert, the *Encyclopedia* is very clear about one aspect of magnetic sleep: the mesmerized patient is none other than a sick person undergoing a particular therapy. It is no surprise that Hegel, like some of those above-named experts on magnetism, should regard magnetic sleep as a sickness. The arguments used by Hegel to support this interpretation are however particularly relevant. First, the magnetized somnambulist finds himself in a *dissociated* state, since his immediate, subjective inner perception is separate and completely independent from the consciousness of the objective reality of the world outside him.²⁸³ For this reason the

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 162 (cf. TWA 10, 132–133): “Das Gefühlsleben als *Form, Zustand* des selbstbewußten, gebildeten, besonnenen Menschen ist eine Krankheit, in der das Individuum sich *unvermittelt* zu dem concreten Inhalte seiner selbst verhält, und sein besonnenes Bewußtseyn seiner und des verständigen Weltzusammenhangs als einen davon unterschiedenen Zustand hat, – *magnetischer Somnambulismus* und mit ihm verwandte Zustände.”

²⁸⁰ Cf. Petry (1991), 258.

²⁸¹ *Werke* 7.2, 197 (cf. TWA 10, 159): “ein Versinken des individuellen Lebens in sich selber.”

²⁸² Ibid., 162 (cf. TWA 10, 133).

²⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*, 168 (cf. TWA 10, 138).

magnetic somnambulist belongs to one of those sicknesses that typically arise due to a *split* (Hegel uses the word *Trennung*) within the individual.²⁸⁴ The withdrawal of the subject within his private world therefore brings with it the detachment (which in the case of magnetic treatment is temporary) from rational consciousness, and the simultaneous receptiveness to a different type of perceptive experience. From Hegel's point of view it was without doubt a *regression*, not an elevation to that special condition that some of those studying animal magnetism had described as *mystical*:

This [genius] is not the free spirit that wants and thinks; the form of feeling in which the individual here appears sunk is rather the giving up of its existence as spirituality that is with itself. The nearest consequence from the determination presented in relation to the *content* is that in somnambulism only the circuit of the individually determined world, of particular interests and limited relations enter into consciousness. Scientific cognitions or philosophical concepts and universal truths require another foundation, that is thought developed to free consciousness from the dullness of life that feels. It is therefore foolish to expect revelations about ideas from the state of somnambulism.²⁸⁵

Hegel explains extremely clearly why the content of the *revelations* uttered by the somnambulist in a state of *trance* has no scientific value: somnambulism is a form of feeling (*Gefühlsform*), a particular perceptive condition based on the limited and subjective experiences of the single individual. It is not a state in which the spirit has maximum liberty, but rather a precipitation into the details and feelings of personal life, inside which the spirit is indeed imprisoned and restricted. "Scientific knowledge or philosophical concepts" can derive only from the exercise of thought and volition on the part of the *free* spirit, whereas it is foolish to expect revelations from the *torpor* (*Dumpfheit*) that characterizes this pure sensitive life. Furthermore, in the first part of his *Berlin Fragment zur Philosophie des Geistes* (*Fragment on Philosophy of Spirit*), in line with what is set out in the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel states:

It will be seen subsequently that the phenomena of animal magnetism do not emerge from the concept of spirit, that is do not reach beyond its thought and its reason, but that on the contrary they only belong to a condition and a level in which it is sick and sunk in a lower existence, below the power of its true value. Therefore it is so foolish and such a wrong hope to want to see in the phenomena of this magnetism an elevation of the spirit and an opening of depths, which would go further than its thinking concept. It is rather these phenomena which within the *field of appearance* require that the concept of spirit be summoned,

²⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 170 (*Zusatz*) (cf. TWA 10, 139), where examples are given of illness caused by a similar *Trennung*, including catalepsy and pregnancy.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 163–164 (cf. the slightly different version in TWA 10, 134): "Dieser [Genius] ist nicht der wollende und denkende freie Geist; die Gefühlsform, in die versunken das Individuum hier erscheint, ist vielmehr das Aufgeben seiner Existenz als bei sich selbst seyender Geistigkeit. Die nächste Folgerung aus der aufgezeigten Bestimmung in Beziehung auf den *Inhalt* ist, daß im Somnambulismus nur der Kreis der individuell bestimmten Welt, particulären Interessen und beschränkten Verhältnisse ins Bewußtseyn tritt. Wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse oder philosophische Begriffe und allgemeine Wahrheiten erfordern einen andern Boden, nämlich das zum freien Bewußtseyn aus der Dumpfheit des fühlenden Lebens entwickelte Denken; es ist daher thöricht, Offenbarungen über Ideen vom somnambulen Zustand zu erwarten."

and do not permit any further lingering on the conceptless grasping of spirit according to *common psychology and the so called natural course of things*.²⁸⁶

Animal magnetism is regarded here once again as a state of illness, which must not be confused with a true *elevation* of spirit, and which cannot represent a path to the discovery of *profundity* – a profundity that is *conceptual*, and which animal magnetism provides only the false hope of being able to reach.

Despite what we might at first think, Hegel regards animal magnetism as a valid and effective therapy.²⁸⁷ An important document in this respect is Schelling's letter to Hegel, dated 22 March 1807, in which he recommends an article on animal magnetism published in the journal *Jahrbücher der Medicin* by his brother Karl Eberhard, who practiced magnetic therapy with a certain success (it will be recalled that he was also named in the correspondence between Hegel and van Ghert).²⁸⁸ Far from sharing Schelling's enthusiasm for animal magnetism,²⁸⁹ it is clear nevertheless that Hegel does not deny the therapeutic value of mesmerism: his sister Christiane, who suffered from 'hysteria', was treated by Karl Eberhard Schelling himself.²⁹⁰ The fact is that therapeutic treatment of a sick patient must not be confused with the acquisition of a prophetic or visionary capacity. So far as the specific moment of *Hellsehen*, Hegel writes:

Therefore what is characteristic of this knowledge is that the same content, which as intellectual actuality is objective for the healthy consciousness, and in order to know which the considerate consciousness requires intellectual mediation in its entire real breadth, can in this immanence *immediately* be known, can be *seen*, by it. This intuition is clairvoyance to the extent that it is knowledge in the undivided substantiality of genius, and is located in the *essence* of correlation, therefore is not tied to the series of mediating conditions, mutually external to each other, which the considerate consciousness has to run through and with regard to which it is limited according to its own external singularity. But this clairvoyance,

²⁸⁶ TWA 11, 521–522: "Es wird sich späterhin zeigen, daß die Erscheinungen des animalischen Magnetismus nicht aus dem Begriffe des Geistes, namentlich nicht über sein Denken und seine Vernunft, hinausgehen, daß sie im Gegenteil nur einem Zustande und einer Stufe angehören, in der er krank und in ein niedrigeres Dasein unter die Kraft seiner wahrhaften Würde herabgesunken ist. So töricht und eine so falsche Hoffnung es daher ist, in den Erscheinungen dieses Magnetismus eine Erhöhung des Geistes und eine Eröffnung von Tiefen, die weiter gingen als sein denkender Begriff, sehen zu wollen, so sind es dagegen diese Erscheinungen, welche *im Felde des Erscheinens* selbst nötigen, den Begriff des Geistes herbeizurufen, und nicht gestatten, bei dem begrifflosen Auffassen des Geistes, nach der *gewöhnlichen Psychologie* und nach dem sogenannten natürlichen Gange der Dinge, mehr stehenzubleiben."

²⁸⁷ Cf. *Werke* 7.2, 196 (cf. TWA 10, 159).

²⁸⁸ Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 2, 116. On K. E. Schelling see Storti (1994).

²⁸⁹ According to Magee (2001), 216, "Schelling was the first among the German idealists to develop an enthusiasm for mesmerism."

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 217. As for Hegel's relationship with the theory of animal magnetism, Magee considers Hegel's interest in mesmerism to be one of the proofs in favor of the rediscovery of an 'esoteric Hegel', where the encounter with Böhme's work represents a fundamental and perfectly integrated element in the interpretation of mesmeric texts. As I have argued in these pages, however, Hegel maintains an attitude of cautious reflection with regard to mesmerism. Furthermore, his study of *Theosophia Revelata* cannot be linked with the background of magnetism: in Hegel's view, there is no point of contact between Böhme's mysticism and the issues of mesmerism.

since in its turbidity the content is not construed as intellectual correlation, is *relinquished* to all its own contingency of feeling, imagining etc., beside the fact that *extraneous* representations [...] enter in its seeing. It is therefore not possible to decide whether that which the clairvoyants see correctly is more than that in which they are deluded. It is vulgar to consider the seeing in this condition as an elevation of spirit and as a truthful condition, capable of *universal* cognitions in itself.²⁹¹

We note first of all the emphasis that Hegel puts on the difference between *mediated* (*vermittelt*) experience, which is typical of the *healthy* and rational consciousness, and the *immediate* (*unvermittelt*) experience, through which the somnambulant in the state of clairvoyance, *Hellsehen*, is said to be capable of reaching a deep (and to some extent exclusive) understanding of the world. For Hegel, it is precisely this *immediacy* of the *Hellsehen* that constitutes the nub of the problem. For many who studied animal magnetism, the ability to have a direct and immediate knowledge of the surrounding environment – often at great distance or to look inside bodies – represented the great revolution of mesmeric treatment, a mystical elevation to otherwise inaccessible levels of knowledge: for Hegel, the immediacy of the somnambulant's vision (which, moreover, he didn't fundamentally challenge) was the Achilles' heel of the theory, the guarantee that it cannot be presented as a source of philosophical knowledge in a true, scientific sense. The immediacy with which the content of the vision is available (the verb *anschauen* is used) deprives it of its inner consistency, so that it appears confused, opaque, turbid. At the same time, a cognitive experience of this kind is defenseless against attacks of the imagination, resulting in "extraneous representations" that are sometimes produced by the somnambulant and which make it difficult to understand whether he perceives correctly or is *mistaken*.

In other words, *Hellsehen* is not firm ground for any kind of scientific understanding. What is more, the *Vorstellungen* (representations) of the somnambulant are not clear: but if positive consideration is to be given to the ability of the *clairvoyant* to recognize his own illness and to spontaneously find a remedy for it, this behavior must be likened to *animal instinct* (and not to extraordinary prophetic capacity!)²⁹²

²⁹¹ *Werke* 7.2, 165–166 (cf. TWA 10, 135–136): "In diesem Wissen ist daher das Charakteristische, daß derselbe Inhalt, der als verständige Wirklichkeit objectiv für das gesunde Bewußtseyn ist, und um den zu wissen es als besonnenes der verständigen *Vermittlung* in ihrer ganzen realen Ausbreitung bedarf, in dieser Immanenz *unmittelbar* von ihm gewußt, *geschaut* werden kann. Dieß Anschauen ist insofern ein *Hellsehen*, als es Wissen in der ungetrennten Substantialität des Genius ist, und sich im *Wesen* des Zusammenhangs befindet, daher nicht an die Reihen der vermittelnden, einander äußerlichen Bedingungen gebunden ist, welche das besonnene Bewußtseyn zu durchlaufen hat und in Ansehung deren es nach seiner eigenen äußerlichen Einzelheit beschränkt ist. Dieß Hellsehen ist aber, weil in seiner Trübheit der Inhalt nicht als verständiger Zusammenhang ausgelegt ist, aller eigenen *Zufälligkeit* des Fühlens, Einbildens u.s.f. *preisgegebenen*, außerdem daß in sein Schauen *fremde* Vorstellungen [...] eintreten. Es ist darum nicht auszumachen, ob dessen, was die Hellsehenden richtig schauen, Mehr ist, oder dessen, in dem sie sich täuschen. – Abgeschmackt ist es, das Schauen dieses Zustandes für eine Erhebung des Geistes und für einen wahrhaften, in sich *allgemeiner* Erkenntnisse fähigen Zustand zu halten."

²⁹² Cf. *Werke* 7.2, 193 (cf. TWA 10, 156–157).

In the *Zusatz* to paragraph 405 Hegel defines *Magie* as that power whose action is not determined by the conditions and by the mediations (*Vermittlungen*) that characterize objective relationships: in this sense *clairvoyance* would be a magical experience. He then adds that the ancient magical practices, in particular mysteries (*Mysterien*), can be considered as traces of a reason (*Vernunft*) that acts instinctively. But, Hegel continues, “such instinctual productions of human reason that lack the form of thought may not be considered as proofs of *primitive scientific cognition*”.²⁹³

In this respect a passage in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, in which Hegel uses mesmeric jargon (and in particular the word *Hellsehen*), is an interesting addition to what has been said so far about Hegel's interpretation of animal magnetism. In the section on “Immediate religion”, or *Naturreligion*, which represents a lower, and therefore first step in Hegel's discussion, the condition of *Hellsehen* in which the magnetized somnambulant finds himself is compared to the stage of natural religion in which there is not yet any separation between the inner life and the outside world, and the soul is therefore withdrawn into a state of perfect inner cohesion.²⁹⁴ Hegel therefore applies the concept of *Hellsehen* with a certain liberty, thereby demonstrating not only that he understands its characteristics, but can also formulate it in a manner independent of the contemporary literature on the subject. Even though this interpretation of magnetic somnambulism doesn't differ substantially in its main features from that provided in the *Encyclopedia* (one notes the emphasis on the immediate character and on the unity typical of this experience), the context is certainly not contentious.²⁹⁵ But the juxtaposition of magnetic *Hellsehen* and natural religion can obviously be understood as a regressive tendency of the first to an original condition, preceding any division.

As happened earlier in the correspondence with van Ghert, in none of the cases referred to does Hegel make any connection between his criticism of magnetic mysticism and the mysticism of Jakob Böhme, even though some of the issues touched on by Hegel – the *Anschauen* of the magnetic somnambulant compared to the *Anschauen* of the mystic, or the turbid nature of the *Vorstellungen* in the former

²⁹³ Ibid., 157 (cf. TWA 10, 129): “Aber solche der Form des Gedankens ermangelnde instinktartige Productionen der menschlichen Vernunft dürfen nicht für Beweise einer *primitiven wissenschaftlichen Erkenntniß* gelten”.

²⁹⁴ Cf. V 4a, 145–146: “Nach dieser Einheit des Geistigen mit der Natur wird in Rücksicht auf die Intelligenz also gesagt: Der Geist in einem solchen Verhältnis sei unmittelbar in dem Begriff, die allgemeine, wahrhafte Natur der Dinge unmittelbar wissend, in der Anschauung sie verstehend, eben weil die Anschauung keine äußerliche ist, Auffassen des Inneren des Begriffs, ein Hellsehen, zu vergleichen mit dem Zustand des Somnambulismus, der eben ist ein Zurückkehren der Seele zu dieser Einheit der Innerlichkeit mit ihrer Welt, so daß diese innerliche Welt ihr aufgeschlossen daliegt, weil sie in diesem Hellsehen befreit ist von den äußeren Bedingungen des Raums und der Zeit, befreit ist von der verständigen Bestimmung der Dinge, so daß in dieser Einheit der Geist hellsehend sei”.

²⁹⁵ W. Jaeschke suggests that in these lines Hegel is criticizing the condition of original perfection, as it is conceived by Friedrich Schlegel and Schelling, but referring also to Böhme at the point describing the state of absolute and immediate fusion between man and God. Given that, from Hegel's point of view, Böhme's mysticism doesn't represent an immediate experience of this type at all, I consider this last indication to be inappropriate (V 4b, 688–690).

compared to the confused and changeable representations in the second – could *at first sight* have offered a link.

These two paragraphs of the *Encyclopedia* make no reference to Böhme. But a note by Hegel himself to paragraph 406 offers an important – though indirect – indication in this respect: Hegel suggests in fact that it is necessary to distinguish between the mystical experience of *Hellsehen* and a different, alternative, conception of the prophetic gift and of mystical enthusiasm. In this context Hegel refers to Plato: “Plato recognized the relationship of *prophecy* in general to the knowledge of the considerate consciousness better than many moderns, who assumed that it was easy to find in Platonic representations of *enthusiasm* an authority for their belief in the elevation of the revelations of somnambulistic seeing.”²⁹⁶ Modern experts on animal magnetism are considered to have a distorted conception of platonic enthusiasm based on their *faith* in the value of the revelations uttered by the magnetized somnambulant: the complex and delicate relationship between prophecy and rational consciousness was in fact recognized and given careful consideration by Plato, unlike what happens in the writings of the “many moderns” to whom Hegel is referring. In this sense, the prophetic accounts of the somnambulist and the faith in his capacity to reach a higher level of consciousness are regarded as no more than a simplification and a misunderstanding of the more careful approach with which Plato had examined the problem of the relationship between rationality and prophetic enthusiasm.

The criticism of magnetic *Hellsehen* is thus given a further characteristic that is particularly relevant for our study: Plato is indicated as a source to which to return in order to reconsider the role of prophecy and mystical enthusiasm. In this way – even though it is a brief footnote – Hegel offers an alternative to the ‘mystical themes’ that animal mysticism is concerned with. It will be seen later how Plato plays an important role in Hegel’s investigation of the concept of mysticism and its various possibilities, an investigation that extends over a broad period of time and within which the mysticism of Jakob Böhme occupies a central place.

We can therefore already sense why animal magnetism and Böhme’s mysticism never meet, either in the correspondence with van Ghert or in the *Encyclopedia*: they are, from Hegel’s point of view, mystical experiences that are radically different, and which mustn’t be confused together. The lack of a relationship is therefore by no means coincidental, and this brief note shows that Hegel was perfectly aware of the possibility of making distinctions even within such a controversial area.

There are therefore no grounds in the case of Hegel for talking about any reception of Böhme’s mysticism through the theories of animal magnetism – on the contrary, the absence of a relationship seems to be relevant in itself and can be justified by referring (at least for the time being) to what is said about the difference, outlined by Hegel in the last passage above, between the irrational mysticism of

²⁹⁶ *Werke* 7.2, 166 (cf. TWA 10, 136): “Plato hat das Verhältniß der *Prophezeiung* überhaupt zum Wissen des besonnenen Bewußtseyns besser erkannt, als viele Moderne, welche an den Platonischen Vorstellungen vom *Enthusiasmus* leicht eine Autorität für ihren Glauben an die Hoheit der Offenbarungen des somnambulen Schauens zu haben meinten.”

Hellsehen and conceptions that are different and worthy of greater attention, such as that of Plato.²⁹⁷

It was shown in the previous section how the theory of animal magnetism came into contact with pietist devoutness (in particular through Oetinger), and how the reception of Böhme's philosophy in Germany was assisted by this convergence. Having now established that Hegel did not come to Böhme's mysticism through the theories of animal magnetism – nor, unlike Baader, Schelling and the other members of the Munich Academy referred to, did he personally practice mesmerism – we shall now consider the role played by pietism in Hegel's contact with German mysticism²⁹⁸ and with Böhme in particular.

3.2 *The Influence of Pietism and Mysticism on the Young Hegel*

The theory that pietism had a clear influence on Hegel as a student at the *Stift* has often been placed side by side with his supposed early interest in mysticism. The link is said to have been first established at the college at Tübingen, where Oetinger himself had studied theology and where, according to the famous study by Schneider, Hegel is said to have made contact, around fifty years later, with pietist religiosity on the one hand and the German mystical tradition on the other. Schneider in fact suggests that the “pietistic-mystical heritage” (“pietistisch-mystisches Gedankengut”)²⁹⁹ – where the generic nature of the expression would indicate the intermingling (to the point of indistinctness) of German mystical tradition with the reformulation provided by pietism – played a crucial role in the young Hegel's education. More recently, Walsh has also stated that Swabian pietism had a determining effect on the course of Hegel's education; and given that Böhme was the main source for the fathers of Swabian pietism, it is no surprise, continues Walsh, that Hegel should devote himself a few years later to a careful study of Böhme's work.³⁰⁰ The same connection between mysticism and pietism (where Böhme and his “dynamic panvitalism” play the link role) is also suggested by

²⁹⁷ On the contact between Böhme's mysticism and animal magnetism, in particular in the writings of F.-R. Saltzmann, which Hegel is said to have mentioned in the Jena aphorisms, see a note by Petry in Hegel (1978), vol. 2, 572.

²⁹⁸ The expression “deutsche Mystik” goes back to K. Rosenkranz, who uses it for the first time in his review of the Diepenbrock edition of the work by Seuse published in 1829. Cf. Fischer (1931), 1: “Der Begriff [*deutsche Mystik*] faßt hier die mystische Spekulation des Meisters Eckhart und seines Kreises als Anfangsstadium der Entwicklung des ‘deutschen Geistes’, die in der ‘neuen universellen Wissenschaft’ Hegels ihre Vollendung – ‘Synthesis’ – erstiegen hätte.”

²⁹⁹ Schneider (1938), 16.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Walsh (1978), 374. Walsh claims that Hegel received a “detailed introduction to the Boehmian corpus in Jena”: as a result of what is stated in the section paragraph, I think it unlikely that this was a *detailed* introduction, whereas it would seem plausible that Hegel first had contact with Böhme's writings (in this sense, a mere introduction) in Jena.

Petrini, who urges the need to bring to light what in his view represents an important and forgotten aspect in the evolution of Hegel's thought, namely his interest in the philosophical assumptions of pietism.³⁰¹

In all the cases mentioned, attention is directed toward the young Hegel, and in particular the period he spent at the *Stift*: as already in the interpretation of Dilthey (which is an essential point of reference for all studies on Hegel's relationship with mysticism), one must therefore look for evidence in the *young* Hegel of a contact with the mystical-pietist tradition, often implicating a split between the purposes of Hegel's early research and the subsequent formulation of his system. In his *Jugendgeschichte Hegels*, Dilthey in fact suggests that Hegel's gradual interest in aspects of mysticism during his younger years, and in particular between Bern and Frankfurt, were followed by a quite different attitude from the publication of his *Phenomenology* onward.³⁰² The same direction is followed by G. P. Adams, who sets out to reconstruct young Hegel's transition through his enthusiasm for the "Romantic mysticism" that he would powerfully repudiate from 1806 onward.³⁰³ In the terms in which the question is posed in Della Volpe's famous essay, it would seem in short that the "Romantic and mystical" Hegel of his early writings was replaced by a decidedly anti-mystical and anti-Romantic Hegel in his mature writings.

The aim of this section will be to propose an alternative way of resolving the following problems: whether it is possible to effectively establish an influence of pietism upon the young Hegel; what is the impact and importance of Hegel's first contact with the German mystical tradition (in particular, Eckhart and Tauler); and lastly, what is the relationship between Hegel's first – supposed – mystical lectures and the emergence of his interest in Böhme, and whether or not pietism had an influence in this respect.

As for Hegel's relationship with pietism, Schneider puts forward various pieces of evidence, though nothing of conclusive value.³⁰⁴ The spread of pietism in the Württemberg region, where the *Stift* is located, and the suggestions about the young Hegel possibly being educated in a social environment close to the pietist religion, are not decisive factors that make it possible to infer that the young philosopher had an interest in Oetinger, nor even less that he actually read his writings.³⁰⁵ Oetinger's name is never mentioned in Hegel's surviving texts – and this constitutes an irresolvable problem for Schneider and for other critics (including for example

³⁰¹ Petrini (1976), vol. 1, 124–125. Petrini suggests that Hegel's second sermon of the Tübingen period shows a clear influence of the pietist tradition (cf. *ibid.*, 123).

³⁰² Dilthey (1921), 54 and 197.

³⁰³ Adams (1910), 70: "Hegel had passed through just that romantic mysticism against which he contends in the preface of the *Phenomenology*."

³⁰⁴ For an overview of the studies that have dealt with the theme of Hegel's relationship with pietism, see Fullenwider (1975), 88–91. The main point of reference is still Schneider's study.

³⁰⁵ Schneider (1938), 16, states for example: "die Erziehung Hegels kann nur 'pietistisch' gewesen sein", but does not provide any details.

Benz)³⁰⁶ who have claimed that pietism was important in Hegel's education.³⁰⁷ M. Brecht and J. Sandberger, who have carried out an extremely careful study of the teaching program at the *Stift* in Tübingen, and particularly of Hegel's education there, suggest on the contrary that it has still not been demonstrated beyond all doubt when and where Hegel could have come into contact with Bengel and Oetinger, the fathers of Swabian pietism.³⁰⁸ Schneider and Benz's emphasis on the recurrence of the words *Leben* and *Liebe* in the young Hegel's writings – words that in their view are directly derived from the particular language of Oetinger – cannot conceal the fact that a direct link is very hard to demonstrate, and the discussion is therefore destined to remain rather vague, due to the very absence of any acknowledgement by Hegel himself.³⁰⁹

The *Stift* was clearly a college of key importance for the development and spread of the pietist movement in the first half of the 1700s: Oetinger and Bengel both studied there and the curriculum was clearly influenced by pietism from the end of the 1600s.³¹⁰ But – as Brecht has pointed out – though it is possible to identify the beginning of this predominance of pietism at the *Stift*, it is more difficult to recognize when it ends,³¹¹ in the same way that it is impossible to quantify the extent of such an influence in the years when Hegel was studying there. So far as the *Stift* library is concerned, Brecht's research is also extremely useful in this respect: the main library in fact contained works by Spener, but not those by the fathers of Swabian pietism.³¹² The spread of pietist ideas in the early years of the eighteenth century would therefore primarily have taken place orally, and through the education of a small group of adherents, who did not however play an important role.³¹³ But the private libraries of the teachers – to which the students didn't however have access³¹⁴ – certainly did include pietist literature: Storr, for example, owned works by Bengel and Oetinger. It clearly cannot therefore be taken for granted that pietist religiosity had an effect on the young Hegel *Stipendiat* at Tübingen.

But although there is no evidence about Hegel's relationship with pietism at the *Stift*, an aphorism of the Jena period jokes about the attitude of Jacobi and Mendelssohn, who as "empty pietists" have their heads bowed and their eyes

³⁰⁶ See, for example, Benz (1952), 280–300, where Oetinger is regarded as one of the main sources of German idealism (cf. in particular 282–283).

³⁰⁷ Schneider (1938) attempts a series of unsatisfactory parallels between the language of Oetinger and some expressions by Hegel, used as proof of an unlikely contact (cf. for example 51 et seq.). Heer (1955) is seen to rely on Schneider's position: in his view the famous motto of the students Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin "Kingdom of God" is to be related to this context (16).

³⁰⁸ Brecht and Sandberger (1969), 49.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 47–48.

³¹⁰ Brecht (1963), 50. Cf. also ibid, 53: "Es ist unverkennbar das Programm des Pietismus in der Ausbildung der Theologen, das hier aufgenommen wird."

³¹¹ Ibid, 50.

³¹² Ibid., 83.

³¹³ Ibid., 57 and 83.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 57 and 90.

upturned.³¹⁵ The lack of any direct reference to Oetinger and Bengel, the fathers of Swabian pietism, as well as this cutting comment, therefore make the suggestion that pietism had a real and marked influence on the young Hegel somewhat improbable, as Carmelo Lacorte has previously rightly pointed out.³¹⁶

It should be mentioned, however, that what has been said for Hegel is not true for his illustrious fellow-student Schelling, for whom pietism in effect represented one aspect (though probably not as important as is suggested by Schneider) of his education, which began in his home environment.³¹⁷ In Schelling's case, the suggestion of an influence of pietism can be justified by the presence of direct references: Oetinger is in fact named by Schelling in several letters. In addition to the letter to his father in 1806 mentioned above, regarding the works of Oetinger requested by Baader, there is also a letter from Schelling to his parents (8 July 1802) in which he says that he would like to receive "some of the best philosophical writings of Oetinger".³¹⁸ Seven years later, Christoph Gottlob Pregizer (Schelling had suggested that his father should get into contact with the "good pastor Pregizer" to obtain a copy of the work of Oetinger)³¹⁹ also wrote a long and detailed letter to Schelling, which accompanied a "very rare manuscript, which no-one in the whole country owns"³²⁰ and which the writer of the letter on this occasion lent to Schelling. Pregizer also announced that he had found a bookseller who owned various works by Oetinger, which he would send to Schelling as he had asked, and also expressed delight about his interest in the theosophist's works. We also know that Schelling's library contained many works by Oetinger when it was put up for auction in 1855.³²¹

It is therefore possible in Schelling's case, unlike that of Hegel, to find evidence of an interest in Oetinger and in pietism. It is notable, however, that Schelling's first

³¹⁵ Cf. GW 5, 496. Cf. also the note of the editors, *ibid.*, 816: Hegel refers in this passage to Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herren Moses Mendelssohn*. The "pietistische Frömmigkeit" is also criticized in Hegel's review of the writings of Solger (in TWA 11, 205–274), where Hegel exploits the play on words between *Lehre* (learning, teaching) and *Leere* (emptiness): pietism is emptiness rather than learning (cf. *ibid.*, 238).

³¹⁶ Cf. Lacorte (1959), in particular 146–150. Küng (1972), 76, refers to Schneider, but suggests keeping a cautious attitude insofar as the "schwäbische Geistesahnen" of Hegel and Schelling. As for Hegel's judgment on pietism, see also *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (*Werke* 12, 281–282; cf. the different formulation in V 5, 266–267): "Dieß ist ein inneres Weben in sich, das Heuchelei, höchste Eitelkeit eben so wohl seyn kann, als auch mit ruhigen, edeln, frommen Bestrebungen zusammen. Es ist das, was man das fromme Gefühlsleben nennt, worauf der Pietismus sich auch einschränkt, der keine objektive Wahrheit anerkennt, gegen die Dogmen, den Inhalt der Religion sich gewendet hat, der zwar auch noch beibehält eine Vermittelung, Beziehung auf Christum, aber diese Beziehung soll im Gefühl, in der inneren Empfindung bleiben."

³¹⁷ Cf. also Brecht and Sandberger (1969), 47: "Anders als bei Schelling, der sich später ausdrücklich für Oetinger interessiert hat, ist bei Hegel aus der Zeit nach dem Studium nichts derartiges bekannt."

³¹⁸ Schelling (1869–1870), vol. 1, 373.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 101.

³²⁰ Pregizer to Schelling (31 October 1809), *ibid.*, 181.

³²¹ Cf. Müller-Bergen (2007), in particular 198–203.

contact with pietism goes back to his home background; it seems therefore that his time at the *Stift* did not play an important role in this respect.³²²

According to Griffero, Schelling's early interest in pietism may have favored his later encounter with the mystical tradition and with Böhme in particular.³²³ Wollgast also traces a continuous line between the Swabian pietist environment in which the young Schelling grew up and his discovery of the medieval mystics and Böhme, which took place during his years in Leipzig, Jena and Würzburg.³²⁴

Though it is not possible in the case of Hegel to suggest that pietism had a similar role, one of the factors put forward by Schneider in support of his argument may be of interest in introducing the second problem I have posed, regarding Hegel's first contact with the German medieval mystical tradition. In the *Lehrbuch* by Johann Wolfgang Jäger, a text often used at the Gymnasium in Stuttgart where Hegel studied, there is a paragraph dedicated to *unio mystica*. The question "Quid est Unio Mystica?" is followed by the answer: "Definitur, quod sit Gratiōsa & Spiritualis inhabitatio totius SS. Trinitatis in corde credentis".³²⁵ According to Schneider, the derivation of this conception of *unio mystica* from the teaching of Oetinger and Bengel is so obvious that the author of the compendium didn't feel it necessary to make an explicit reference to the two theologians. The young Hegel would have been introduced to the concept of mystical union with the Divine through the filter of pietism. Here again, as with the other evidence adduced by Schneider to support his proposition, the reference is too vague for us to be convinced of a clear influence of pietism on the passage quoted and therefore on Hegel's study. But the reference to Jäger's compendium directs attention to the nature of Hegel's first contacts with the lexicon of the mystical tradition. There is a section on the concept of *unio mystica* in the *Compendium theologiae dogmaticae* by C. F. Sartorius, which was used as a guide for the preparation of the so-called *loci theologici* in the years when Hegel was attending the *Stift*. The *loci* were exercises on theological questions; they were performed every week without fail (generally each Monday) and were regarded as an integral and essential part of the curriculum.³²⁶ Hegel would therefore have been questioned at Stuttgart, and later at Tübingen, on the concept of *unio mystica* through their presentation in the books of Jäger and Sartorius.

Whether the young Hegel had a particular interest in the German mystical tradition (beyond what he could have learned in these compendia) remains, however, a difficult question to answer. It is known that in a notebook from his years

³²² Vieillard-Baron (1999), 238, suggested that the claim that Schelling and Hegel had contact with pietism at Tübingen is unfounded.

³²³ Cf. Griffero (2004), 504. See also Griffero (2000).

³²⁴ Cf. Wollgast (1976), 164.

³²⁵ Schneider (1938), 13.

³²⁶ See Brecht and Sandberger (1969), 52–53. For the history and development of the practice of *loci theologici* at the *Stift* see Leube (1921), in particular 67. For details about how *loci theologici* were conducted, see Brecht and Sandberger (1969), 54–57.

in Bern³²⁷ Hegel transcribed several phrases from Eckhart's German sermons,³²⁸ and this detail has led various critics to suggest that the young philosopher was already interested in Eckhart's mysticism at this time.³²⁹ According to Donata Schoeller, who has carried out a study of Hegel's relationship with Eckhart's mysticism, Schelling and Hölderlin had already read the works of Eckhart and Tauler at the *Stift*: but Schoeller's suggestion cannot be proved as there is no evidence of such a reading and it must necessarily remain at the level of an interesting idea.³³⁰

Returning to the notes on Eckhart in his Bern notebook, it should also be pointed out that Hegel in fact made direct use of a volume of sermons, since the passages in question are taken word for word from the *Kirchengeschichte* by Mosheim,³³¹ from the chapter entitled *Historia sectarum et haeresiarum*. The extracts from the sermons are presented by Mosheim as samples of the content of those *secretiores libri* that formed the basis for the teaching of the medieval sects of the *Beguines* and *Beghards*;³³² Eckhart is not in fact named on this occasion, even though his thought

³²⁷ See GW 3, 215–216 and 292–293. See also *ibid.*, 245: “Schon am Ausgang der Schweizerperiode finden sich unter Hegel's Papieren Excerpte von Stellen aus Meister *Eckart* und *Tauler*, die er sich aus Literaturzeitungen abschrieb. (*Rosenkranz: Hegel's Leben*. 102).”

³²⁸ Cf. Halfwassen (1999), 32–33.

³²⁹ In this respect see (in addition to the study by Tassi (2003) which will be amply referred to below), Jamme (1983), in particular 130: “Schon in Bern kommt ein weiterer Einfluß hinzu: Hegel macht sich nämlich anlässlich einer Lektüre von Johann Lorenz von Mosheims *Kirchengeschichte* des 13. Jahrhunderts (die auch Lessing schätzte und benützte) Exzerpte aus Predigten Meister Eckharts sowie des Bischofs Jean von Straßburg. Zu einem ersten Aufdämmern der Einheitsidee mag es bei Hegel gekommen sein, als er sich den Satz exzerpierte, Gott habe den Sohn ‘sine omni divisione’ erzeugt (N 367; vgl. a. Ros 102).” Also the abovementioned Della Volpe (1929) is largely devoted to discussing the influence that reading Eckhart had on young Hegel.

³³⁰ Schoeller (1992), 27 et seq. Independently of the question whether Hegel read the work of Eckhart, Schoeller proposes in his work a series of parallels between Hegel's lexicon and that of the Dominican master (cf. for example 93).

³³¹ The edition used by Hegel is the following: *IO. Laur. Moshemii Institutionum historiae ecclesiasticae antiquae et recentioris libri quatuor ex ipsis fontibus insigniter emendati, plurimis accessionibus locupletati, variis observationibus illustrati*, Helmstadt: Weygand, 1755. This edition was to be found in the *Steigerschen Bibliothek* at Tschugg where Hegel spent the summer months in the years 1794–1796 (cf. GW 3, 292). In this respect, see also HL, 48.

³³² Already in *Man mag die widersprechendsten Betrachtungen...* (included by Nohl among the texts collected together under the title *Die Positivität der christlichen Religion*) Hegel refers twice to Mosheim's *Kirchengeschichte*. The second reference is particularly interesting: in a margin note Hegel in fact writes “Beguinen bei Mosheim”. The main text to which the note refers is the following: “es musste von Zeit zu Zeit Menschen geben, die in dieser kirchlichen Legalität, in einem Charakter, wie ihn die Ascetik zu bilden fähig ist, die Forderungen ihres eigenen Herzens nicht befriedigt fanden, und sich fähig fühlten, ein Gesetz der Moralität sich zu geben, das aus Freiheit hervorgienge; [Am Rande: Beguinen bei Mosheim] behielten sie ihren Glauben nicht für sich allein, so wurden sie Stifter einer Sekte, die im Fall sie nicht von der Kirche unterdrückt wurde, sich ausbreitete, und je mehr sie sich von ihrer Quelle an fortwälzte, wieder nur die Regeln und Gesetze ihres Stifters übrigbehielt, die für ihre Anhänger nun auch nicht mehr Gesetze aus Freiheit sondern wieder kirchliche Statuten waren; welches wieder die Entstehung neuer Sekten herbeiführte” (GW 1, 349). According to G. Schüler and F. Nicolin the exact passage to which Hegel refers is: *Institutionum historiae ecclesiasticae libri IV, saec. XIII, par. II, cap. II, §§ XL, XLI*. It can therefore be deduced

is considered in the next section, dedicated to the nineteenth century. Mosheim in fact quotes several well known formulations *attributed* to Eckhart and condemned by the papal bull *In agro dominico*.³³³

But it is no surprise that Hegel took Eckhart's words from Mosheim's *Kirchengeschichte*, which played an important role in the rediscovery of Eckhart between 1700 and 1800.³³⁴ Eckhart's works seem to have disappeared in Germany after the author's death, like those of Böhme – though this happened in a rather different manner. It was in reality more of a partial eclipse: Eckhart's sermons in fact continued to be copied and read, becoming fairly widespread, but were in most cases attributed to his follower Tauler, whose thought had no originality compared to that of his master. Eckhart was often known only through quotes in Tauler's sermons, so that for a long time Tauler had a greater influence than Eckhart (Luther himself recommended reading Tauler's sermons, which were also read by Abraham von Franckenberg).³³⁵

As for the effect of Meister Eckhart's thought on the young Hegel, Tassi has examined this question in a study in which he suggests that the problem of the *Menschwerdung* as considered by Eckhart emerges clearly in the *Life of Jesus*, a text dating from the same years as the transcription of the extract from the *Kirchengeschichte*, which in this respect "from a critical point of view, assumes the significance of a confirmation and at the same time the value of proof",³³⁶ in other words it marks the point in which Hegel's interest in Eckhart, already recognizable according to Tassi during his years in Bern, surfaces in the young philosopher's writings. Indeed, this *Exzerpt* constitutes the *only* genuine proof in support of Tassi's contention, which, despite the accuracy of his study, remains of necessity fairly vague due to the lack of textual references (in all probability, Hegel didn't actually read a copy of Eckhart's work).

Hegel's early interest in Eckhart's mysticism has been interpreted by Tassi and by other critics in the context of a more general reception of Neoplatonic philosophy

that already in the years 1795–1796 Hegel had a detailed knowledge of the chapter in the *Kirchengeschichte* dedicated to the religious sects of 1300, in which Mosheim includes references to the sermons of Eckhart. According to A. Tassi, Hegel could already have studied Mosheim's work – among the books in Storr's extremely well stocked library – during his years at Tübingen (cf. Tassi (2003), 17–18 and 24).

³³³ Cf. Tassi (2003), 99: "These more exactly are articles 20, 21, 26 (appendix 1, 2), 22 and 12 of the Papal Bull. No mention is made of Eckhart either in the note or in the context of § X of Mosheim's work, which specifically names him only once at § Y [...] Note f) refers to the source of information about Eckhart used by Mosheim [...]. This is the work *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum recensiti notisque historicis et criticis illustrati / inchoavit Jacobus Quetif, absolvit Jacobus Echard* (Lutetiae Parisiorum 1719–1721), which at 507 et seq. contains a long note entitled 'Convivium magistri Echardi de paupertate spiritus.'"

³³⁴ Fischer (1931), 8. It is noted that Eckhart is admired by G. Arnold (cf. *ibid.*)

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 et seq.

³³⁶ Tassi (2003), 96.

(an essential source of Eckhart's mysticism)³³⁷ on the part of Hegel and of Schelling and Hölderlin, his fellow students at the *Stift* in Tübingen: a reception that certainly played an important role in their education. Hegel, in particular, would already be reading a German version of the *Symposium* in 1792.³³⁸ During the same years, it has been established that both Hegel and Schelling were interested in the *Praeparatio evangelica* by Eusebius of Caesarea, a text that contains an interpretation of the dogma of the Trinity in the Neoplatonic tradition.³³⁹ The suggestion that Hegel encountered Eckhart's thought can therefore be regarded with particular favor, given the ideological proximity of Eckhart's mysticism to the Neoplatonic problem of the triadic movement of the Divine, transmitted in particular by such texts as Eusebius's *Praeparatio*.

Despite this, there is, in my view, still a lack of final proof of an effective study and an actual reception of Eckhart's thought on the part of the young Hegel, at least from an examination of the texts surviving from his youth (acknowledging therefore that most of the material is irretrievably lost, together with clearer evidence that such a reading may have taken place). Hegel makes direct reference to Eckhart's sermons on only one occasion (whereas Tauler is never mentioned), in his Berlin *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.³⁴⁰ As Walter Jaeschke and others have pointed out, the reference to Eckhart was in all probability inspired by a conversation with Baader, whom Hegel had met several times in Berlin during the winter of

³³⁷ Cf. for example Halfwassen (1999), 32–33: "Zugang zur *mystischen* Tradition neuplatonischer Provenienz hatte Hegel unter anderem durch die *Kirchengeschichte* Johann Lorenz von Mosheims, mit der er sich in seiner Berner Zeit (1793–1796) intensiv beschäftigte." In this respect, see also Fischer (1931), 20 et seq.

³³⁸ Cf. Tassi (2003), 15. On Hegel and Hölderlin as readers of Plato at the *Stift*, see also Düsing (1981), 101–117, in particular 102. It has been established that Hegel's personal library contained a Bipont edition of Plato (1786) from at least his years at Jena: cf. Vieweg (1997), 200. See also *ibid.*, 197–198: "schon beim jungen Hegel (Frankfurt und Jena) können, obwohl vor 1800 eine Lektüre Plotinischer Werke im Original bisher nicht nachweisbar ist, einzelne Bruchstücke einer *indirekten, vermittelten* Rezeption von Gedanken eines Proklos und Plotin bzw. ein Aufnehmen von Ideen, welche Hegel den Neuplatonikern zuschrieb (letzteres im Sinne produktiver Fehldeutung, aufgewiesen werden. Quellen für eine solche *second hand*-Rezeption waren für Hegel wohl vor allem Ficino und Bruno, Spinoza und Shaftesbury, Hemsterhuis und Wieland, Herder und Jacobi, Schiller und Hölderlin)."

³³⁹ Cf. Tassi (2003), 16 which also states that there was a copy of *Praeparatio evangelica* in the library at the *Stift*. Hegel makes direct reference to Eusebius's work in *The Spirit of Christianity* (in N, 245).

³⁴⁰ The section dedicated to the *Begriff der Religion* in the 1824 course (for which the Griesheim manuscript provides the most faithful account), contains the following: "Ältere Theologen haben diese Tiefe auf das Innigste gefaßt, besonders aber katholische; in der protestantischen Kirche sind Philosophie und diese Wissenschaft ganz auf die Seite gesetzt worden. Meister Eckhart, ein Dominikanermönch des 14. Jahrhunderts, sagt unter anderem in einer seiner Predigten über dies Innerste: 'das Auge, mit dem mich Gott sieht, ist das Auge, mit dem ich ihn sehe; mein Auge und sein Auge ist eins. In der Gerechtigkeit werde ich in Gott gewogen und er in mir. Wenn Gott nicht wäre, wäre ich nicht; wenn ich nicht wäre, so wäre er nicht. Dies ist jedoch nicht Not zu wissen, denn es sind Dinge, die leicht mißverstanden werden und die nur im Begriff erfaßt werden können'" (V 3, 248).

1823–1824.³⁴¹ In response to the enthusiastic presentation of Eckhart that Baader, it is suggested, gave to Hegel during a private meeting, Hegel would declare with equal enthusiasm: “there we have what we are looking for.”³⁴² But Baader states that Hegel at that time knew Eckhart “only by name” – and this would confirm the fact that there had been no genuine reception of Eckhart’s mysticism by the young Hegel.

The introduction of Eckhart into the course on the philosophy of religion was therefore directly influenced by the discussion with Baader:³⁴³ after their meeting, writes Baader, Hegel was so enthusiastic that the next day he gave a whole lecture on Eckhart.³⁴⁴ It is therefore probable that Hegel’s reference to the sermons (Hegel in fact grafts together expressions from at least three different sermons)³⁴⁵ was also given to him by Baader, and that even on this occasion – despite his enthusiasm – he did not undertake any real work of reformulating the material given to him by his friend. There are no other references to Eckhart in texts following the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1824.³⁴⁶

At this point it must be asked what remains of the theory suggesting that the young Hegel showed a clear interest in certain mystical literature, and Eckhart in particular. In my view, Sartorius’ compendium directly encouraged a reflection by the student Hegel on the conception of *unio mystica* – though in a paradoxical

³⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, xv; note 402.

³⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, 402: “Da haben wir es ja, was wir suchen.” See also Jamme (1983), 131; Küng (1970), 138–139.

³⁴³ In the *Nachschrift* of the same lectures compiled by Hotho, also appear the words: “Eckhart (nach Baader)” (cf. V 3, 248).

³⁴⁴ Cf. V 3, 402 (W. Jaeschke quoted from: von Baader (1851–1869), vol. 15, 159).

³⁴⁵ Jaeschke (V 3, 402) has identified three sermons: *Qui audit me* (Daz ouge...); *Iustus in perpetuum vivet* (Der gerechte lebet in gote und got in im...); *Beati pauperes spiritu* ([...] wäre ich nicht, so wäre auch ‘Gott’ nicht [...]). It must be pointed out that the reference to Eckhart in this extended form (with references to three sermons) is not to be found in any other surviving manuscript of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*: in C. Pastenaci, Eckhart is not even mentioned; in Hotho and Deiters there is a briefer reference to the passages of the sermons. It is therefore possible that Griesheim later added the references cited by Hegel during the lectures, using secondary sources, (cf. *ibid.*). From these references to Eckhart’s three sermons, J. Halfwassen (1999), 141, states that he can deduce, with excessive optimism, that Hegel knew Eckhart’s teaching on reincarnation. Finally, an interesting point should be made: van Ghert writes to Hegel in 1828 to thank him for having sent the notebooks of various students who had attended his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. As well as exchanging literature on animal magnetism and sending the works of Böhme, various manuscripts relating to philosophy and religion were therefore also passing between Hegel and van Ghert (cf. *ibid.*, xv).

³⁴⁶ In the introduction to the Italian edition of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Oberti and Borruso state: “Through the filter of philosophy, the study of the German mystics, Meister Eckhart and above all Tauler, also provided the means for passing on to a more speculative vision of the Christian religion” (Hegel (1983), vol. 1, xx). To give the *study* of Eckhart and Tauler (a study for which no concrete evidence exists) such an important role for the development by Hegel of a “more speculative vision of the Christian religion” is not in my view correct. Yet Oberti and Borruso make no reference to the clearer case, namely Böhme, whose mysticism represents for Hegel the attempt to give expression to speculative depth.

manner, as we shall see in the next section. But it cannot be shown that Eckhart's mysticism had an influence on Hegel's surviving early writings.

It has often been argued that the poetical composition *Eleusis*, written in the summer of 1796 (therefore at the end of his time in Bern) and dedicated to Hölderlin, is proof of Hegel's early enthusiasm for the mystical tradition, an enthusiasm that is said to be shared by Hölderlin.³⁴⁷ According to Jamme, the idea that Hegel seems to be putting forward in *Eleusis*, namely that it is possible to directly experience the Divine, is derived from his early mystical readings.³⁴⁸ Here *mystical* clearly means, as it did previously in Dilthey, the possibility of an immediate relationship with the Divine. In this sense man is given the capacity to rise up *mystically*, in other words directly and immediately, to divine heights, in which he becomes lost.³⁴⁹ Dilthey emphasized this very element – the fading of each individual into the divine One and All – which, in his view, makes *Eleusis* a crucial text for recognizing the *mystical pantheism* of the young Hegel.³⁵⁰

Discussion on the supposed mysticism of *Eleusis* (for example between Dilthey, Haering and Niel)³⁵¹ focused above all on two lines, in which Hegel declares enthusiastically: "I give myself up to the immeasurable, / I am in it, am all, am only it."³⁵² Haering drew attention, however, to the fact that Hegel drew a vertical bar over certain lines, including those quoted, as though there had been a change of mind: Hegel had realized, according to Haering, that he was too close to the language of Hölderlin, and by deleting the lines in question he would therefore have taken a clear step back. So the impression that Hegel professes a form of mystical pantheism in *Eleusis* is not altogether justified: instead, he is said to have yielded – but only for a moment – to the terminology of his friend Hölderlin.³⁵³

Even the reference, at the beginning of the poem, to faithfulness toward what is described as the "alter Bund", the ancient bond or pact (or the slogan, the *Loosung*, "Reich Gottes!")³⁵⁴ refers to the friendship with Hölderlin and to their joint readings (together with Schelling) at the *Stift*, in which a prime role was played by Jacobi's

³⁴⁷ Cf. Asveld (1953), 3; Wahl (1994), 194–195. M. Bozzetti has however emphasized the fact that Hölderlin probably never received Hegel's composition (cf. Bozzetti (2004), 82). It should be noted that according to Jamme (1983), 27–28, the influence of pietism can be seen in the poetical compositions of the young Hölderlin.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Jamme (1983), 131.

³⁴⁹ In this respect, for example, B. Bowman writes: "Im Mittelpunkt der Hegelschen Hymne steht die Erfahrung eines mystischen Zustands der Selbstvergessenheit, eine Einheitserfahrung" (cf. Bowman (2006), 465).

³⁵⁰ Cf. Dilthey (1921), 37: "[das Gedicht Eleusis an Hölderlin aus dem August 1796], in dem sich das pantheistische Gefühl mit wunderbar unmittelbarer Kraft ausspricht".

³⁵¹ In this respect see Küng (1970), 137.

³⁵² GW 1, 400: "ich gebe mich dem unermesslichen dahin, / ich bin in ihm bin alles, bin nur es."

³⁵³ Haering (1929–1938), vol. 1, 291–292. I should point out that Haering reads "ich gebe mich dem Unendlichen dahin" whereas in the critical edition edited by F. Nicolin and G. Schüler the line reads "ich gebe mich dem unermesslichen dahin", an expression that in the view of the editors was influenced instead by Schelling (cf. GW 1, 642).

³⁵⁴ Cf. GW 1, 642.

Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn (Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Mr. Moses Mendelssohn). The bond between the three students – Hegel, Hölderlin and Schelling – seems to have been sealed by the formula “hen kai pan”, written by Hölderlin (or Hegel?) at the end of a comment added to Hegel's *Stammbuch* in February 1791.³⁵⁵ “Hen kai pan” thus became the motto that referred to the theory according to which the young Hegel, influenced by the cooperation with Hölderlin and Schelling, is said to have supported a pantheist vision derived from Spinoza,³⁵⁶ symbolized by the lines of *Eleusis*.³⁵⁷ Tilliette has argued that this reference to the One and All is clearly of mystical origin, and seems to have been inspired in some way by the “rational mysticism” of Nicholas of Cusa – even though no direct line of influence can be traced.³⁵⁸

The theory according to which young Hegel is said to have had an interest in mysticism is therefore based on the above considerations and writings: the passages from Eckhart in Mosheim on the one hand, and the poem *Eleusis* on the other (whose roots must be searched out in his relationships with Hölderlin and Schelling, fellow students at the *Stift*, and in what they read together). But it is difficult to determine whether there is a relationship between the two texts, apart from observing that they were both written within a short space of time. In my view, no clear allusions to a reading of Eckhart can be found in *Eleusis*. But the poem dedicated to Hölderlin is not the only text in his years in Bern in which Hegel tackles the mystical problem of the direct approach to the Divine: nor, as we will see in the next sections, is it even the most significant document showing evidence of the young Hegel reflecting on the characteristics of mysticism. The fragments we shall examine will show in fact that – aside from the dispute on the presumed mystical pantheism of the young philosopher – Hegel was already thinking about mysticism in the years prior to his move to Jena, and in a far more complex and multifaceted way than is indicated by the studies on the ‘young mystical Hegel’ cited above (for example, the primacy of the concept of *immediacy* (*Unmittelbarkeit*) as an essential characteristic of the mystical approach will be questioned). During his time in Bern, Hegel had therefore begun to think about the problem of mysticism. Given that no trace of a

³⁵⁵ See Jonkers (2007), 112; cf. also HL, 40.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Lacorte (1959), 248. See also: Pöggeler (1990), 68–111, in particular 78: “Wie die Stifter die Göttlichkeit des Göttlichen im Aufbrechen des Gottesreiches zu denken suchen, zeigt sich, wenn sie aus Jacobis Schrift *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* die Formel Hen kai pan als ihr Glaubenssymbol übernehmen.” And *ibid.*, 79: “Der Tübinger Kreis um Hölderlin und Hegel hat Jacobis Spinoza-Buch gemeinsam gelesen”.

³⁵⁷ Cf. for example Bowman (2004), 13: “das Gedicht [*Eleusis*] [bringt] die Mysterien tendenziell mit einer ‘spinozistischen’, von Hegel später als ‘orientalisch’ identifizierten Anschauung des Absoluten in Verbindung.”

³⁵⁸ Tilliette (2001), 19, cited also in Bozzetti (2004), 9. Also Metzke (1956–1957), 216, who devoted a study to the points of contact between Cusa and Hegel, clarifies that nowhere does Hegel name the cardinal, and therefore that no direct influence can be established (“Hegel hat Nicolaus von Cues an keiner Stelle erwähnt. Auch in seinen Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie taucht der Name des Cusanus nirgends auf. [...] Und doch ist niemand dem Denken des Nicolaus von Cues so nahegekommen wie Hegel.”)

reading of Eckhart can be found even in the fragments mentioned, it must be concluded that the transcription of the passages from Mosheim represents an interesting, though not crucial, factor in our study.

As for Jakob Böhme, it has been said that the first evidence of Hegel's contact with Böhme's mysticism dates back to his years in Jena: before that time there is nothing to suggest an early interest by Hegel in the shoemaker. Although it is known that both German medieval mysticism³⁵⁹ and Böhme's mysticism penetrated into pietist circles, in the case of Hegel it cannot be shown either that there was a significant influence of pietism on the young philosopher, or – less still – a reception of Böhme's mysticism through the filter of pietism.³⁶⁰ Hegel therefore began reading *Theosophia Revelata* in later years, and his interest in Böhme grew from 1811 onward. Furthermore, as has now become clear, his study of Böhme's work commenced and evolved in a totally independent manner, in comparison with that interpretation of Böhme's mysticism that had found particular success between 1700 and 1800 through the channels of animal magnetism and pietism. Hegel – a fact of no lesser importance – was much 'behind' his contemporaries in developing an interest in Böhme: the *Schlegelei* group discovered Böhme at the end of the eighteenth century; Baader – as already mentioned – approached Böhme through Saint-Martin, probably around 1792–1793;³⁶¹ Schelling, after an initial contact with Böhme's mysticism around 1799, tried in vain to obtain his own copy of *Theosophia Revelata* until 1804, the year in which he acquired an octavo edition of the works and in which there are the first documented readings.³⁶² It therefore seems that Hegel's reading of Böhme (a reading that almost certainly did not begin prior to 1811–1812), starts much later in comparison with the tendency of that period.

We will return later to consider one important difference between Hegel and Schelling's respective interpretations of Böhme's philosophy:³⁶³ but it should be pointed out here that Schelling's reception of Böhme's mysticism did not take place independently of the experimentation into animal magnetism (as indicated in the previous section), nor of the background out of which mesmerism developed, from Paracelsus to theosophy.³⁶⁴ Though no direct link can be traced between the influence of pietism and the discovery of Böhme, we know that the pietist tradition played a not insignificant role in the education of the young Schelling, who later became an interested reader in the works of Oetinger. This structure, the basis on which Schelling (and other readers of that time) encountered the writings of Jakob Böhme, is *entirely absent* in the case of Hegel. Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's

³⁵⁹ Cf. Fischer (1931), 28.

³⁶⁰ J. Wahl alludes to a general influence of Eckhart and Böhme on Hegel's thought, but without entering into detail and above all without explaining whether a relationship between the reception of the two can be supposed (cf. Wahl (1994), in particular 126 and 129).

³⁶¹ Baumgardt (1927), 224–225.

³⁶² Cf. Brown (1977), 114–116. According to Brown, there is already evidence of a reading of *Theosophia Revelata* in *Philosophy of Religion* of 1804.

³⁶³ Cf. below, Chap. 2, [Appendix](#).

³⁶⁴ Cf. also Tilliette (1999), 68.

mysticism is therefore distinguishable from the others (particularly that of Schelling and Baader) from the very outset.

Hegel's late encounter with *Theosophia Revelata* fits into the context of the philosopher's reflection on the nature of mystical experience, a reflection that begins in his early writings: when he receives Böhme's complete works as a present from van Ghert and undertakes a careful study of them for the first time, Hegel already has a long experience of philosophical elaboration around the subject of *mysticism*. Böhme's reading would have an essential function of directing the development of this reflection from 1811 onward, but it was not the point of departure. Starting from the early writings, we will now follow the path that leads Hegel first of all to distinguish between two opposing mystical attitudes, and therefore to elect Böhme as the one who best exemplifies mystical philosophy, as opposed to a pseudo-mystical or esoteric tendency that is already criticized in the early writings and which will form the centre of the famous attack that took place in the pages of the *Phenomenology*.

Chapter 2

Two Different Conceptions of Mysticism in Hegel's Writings

1 The Meaning of Mysticism and Its Role in the Early Writings

This section provides the starting point for an inquiry into the evolution of two diverging conceptions of *mysticism* in Hegel's thought. It aims to reconstruct Hegel's reflection on the nature of mystical experience by following the traces of his engagement with this topic, an engagement that is already apparent in the early writings. As this journey unfolds, from the early fragments to the later works, it will become clear that Hegel progressively *tends* toward a distinction between two principal meanings of mysticism, which differ considerably from one another. The first type of mysticism is of a speculative nature: not only is it deemed compatible with the rigor of philosophy, but it is also presented as an important and healthy philosophical approach in its own right. To this first type of mysticism, Hegel opposes a second type which he deems anti-philosophical because it is lacking in philosophical depth. The narrative of this progressive differentiation can only be reconstructed on the basis of fragments, indications, brief comments and subtle terminological distinctions, for nowhere does Hegel discuss the problem comprehensively or separately, and his use of terminology remains variable and unsystematic throughout. Nevertheless, there is no shortage of evidence confirming that Hegel reflected upon this issue repeatedly and, above all, with great originality.

The trail I propose to follow sets out from Hegel's early works and leads ultimately to a discussion of his interpretation of Böhme's mysticism. Approaching the topic in this way will not only shed light on the motivations behind Hegel's interpretation but will also, and above all, allow us to situate it within the wider context of his thought. By the time he began reading Böhme, after 1811, Hegel had already begun to reflect on the various meanings of the term *mysticism*; the *Phenomenology* was a key step in this process. The present inquiry does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of these early reflections but rather to propose a possible

itinerary through this material, to orient the reader toward a better understanding of Böhme's important role in Hegel's *History of Philosophy*. The first part is dedicated to the early writings, in which the distinction between two different conceptions of mysticism is already present *in nuce*; the two remaining parts will go on to consider how they evolved.

1.1 *Mysticism in Fragments on Popular Religion and Christianity*

The first occurrence of the term *mysticism* (*Mystik*) in Hegel's early writings can be found in the fragments grouped by Nohl under the title *Volksreligion und Christentum* (*Popular Religion and Christianity*), near the end of the first fragment.¹ As is well known, in these early writings Hegel tackles the problem of establishing the foundations of a popular religion which, by creating a "spirit of the people" (*Geist des Volkes*), might be able to guarantee people's political freedom.² It is in this context that Hegel compares the religion of the Greeks to "our religion", that is, to Christianity.³ The former, according to Hegel, was based on a careful use of the "beautiful imagination" (*schöne Phantasie*), of religious celebrations – such as the Bacchanals – which were also popular festivities, and this is why it could have such a positive and liberating effect on the Greek people.⁴ Indeed, the imagination is essential to the transformation of a religion into a popular religion (*Volksreligion*) capable of operating on a political level through the creation of a vital and free community (*heart* – *Herz* – and *imagination* – *Phantasie* – intertwine in Hegel's argument).⁵ In contrast, Christian religion cannot, for intrinsic reasons, become a popular religion: while the imaginative festivities of the Greek world sought a sense of cohesion and community, Christian religion seeks only to "educate men to be citizens of heaven, whose gaze is directed upwards, and human sentiments become foreign to them".⁶

¹N, 28. This first fragment purportedly dates back to 1793, Hegel's last year in Tübingen, and is often referred to as the *Tübinger Fragment*. The four subsequent fragments, regrouped in Nohl's edition under the title *Volksreligion und Christentum* (*Popular Religion and Christianity*), were written in Bern between 1794 and 1795. In GW 1, 83–113 (*Religion ist eine der wichtigsten Angelegenheiten...*).

²N, 27: "Volksreligion [...] geht Hand in Hand mit der Freiheit."

³Ibid.

⁴See R. Kroner's introduction to ETW, in particular 9.

⁵See TWA 1, 37. On the relationship that binds *Herz*, *Phantasie* and *Sinn* to the concept of *Volksreligion*, see Menze (1990), 215–235, and in particular 225 et seq. On the same theme, especially on the importance of *Sinnlichkeit* to the foundation of a *Volksreligion*, see Schmidt (1997), 42 et seq. Jaeschke has underlined the fact that, in the first of the Tübingen fragments, Hegel understands *Volksreligion* as the locus of an encounter – albeit provisional – between reason and imagination (Jaeschke (1983), 44).

⁶N, 27: "Unsere Religion will die Menschen zu Bürgern des Himmels, deren Blick immer aufwärts gerichtet ist, erziehen, und darüber werden ihnen menschliche Empfindungen fremd." Hegel

In precisely this context, while referring to the contrast between these two types of religion, Hegel refers to mysticism using the ironic expression “bittersweet bread of mysticism”.⁷ The Greek, argues Hegel, was raised on the “plain and healthy milk of pure perceptions” and with the “beautiful, free imagination (*Phantasie*)”. He was not raised on this sugary bread of mysticism, as indigestible as it is soporific; nor was he bound by words that kept him in a state of permanent subjection. Hegel’s target, when he refers to the illusion of satisfaction provoked by the bread of mysticism and to the binding power of words, is always Christian religion. In both cases, the result is one of alienation and rupture. The man – or the stomach – dozing in the soporific feeling of contentment provided by this form of mysticism, is no longer present to himself: he has become estranged from his own being. “Binding words”, moreover, only draw him further into this state of lethargy and inaction, from which he can free himself only with great difficulty. Christian religion acts by provoking a double rift: within the individual and between the individuals of the community. Where Greek religion had sought to unify and unite, using the imagination as a means to harmonize and reinforce relationships among humans and between humans and the world, the “citizens of heaven” are doomed to live in the world as in a foreign land.

What, we should ask, does Hegel mean by *mysticism* here? The bread defined as *mystical* is said to produce an effect of calm contentment, by which Hegel means a vague feeling of union and a sense of belonging to a whole. This is not an active sense of belonging, like that of the Greek and his community: it is utterly passive and with no vitality. Hegel does not delve further into the role of mysticism at this stage and, I believe, for good reason. The term is not used in any specific sense, nor is it meant to refer to a particular tradition. Instead, it is employed to emphasize the irreconcilable differences between Greek and Christian approaches to the relationship of man to the world. While the former is described as healthy and harmonious (like the healthy “milk of pure perceptions”), the latter has, in the eyes of the young Hegel, given rise to an insurmountable scission between man and world, separating the faithful from their natural and worldly substratum, and elevating them – *mystically* – to the heights of a celestial and impalpable world to which they ultimately feel far more to belong. In this context, mysticism is simply the name given to this separation; a phenomenon thus as alienating as it is elusive, for though the stomach thinks it is full, it is in fact only asleep. Metaphors aside, if the faithful Christian is lulled into a feeling of harmony with the Divine (we will see, in due course, how such a feeling is brought about), in reality he has simply lost touch with his own self.

Hegel’s ironic attitude toward the *mystical* tendency of Christian religion is evident in other fragments of *Popular Religion and Christianity*. In the second part of fragment 3,⁸ which begins after a break with the words “öffentliche Gewalt” (“public

returns to the question of the role and value of imagination within Christian religion in a *Notizenblatt* written in the period stretching from 1792/1793 to 1794: see GW 1, 78–79.

⁷N, 28: “sauersüße[s] Zuckerbrot der Mystik”.

⁸The fourth fragment in TWA corresponds, in fact, to the third fragment in Nohl’s edition.

power”),⁹ Hegel attacks the typical “policing” techniques of Christianity (“confession, excommunication, expiation and the whole series of shameful monuments to the humiliation of humanity”).¹⁰ These techniques are also present, albeit in a different form and to a different degree, in the reformed Christian faith of Luther. Theological compendia in particular present, in a language as abstruse as it is mysterious, a religious journey subdivided into innumerable ‘stations’ and oriented toward a salvation that is, of course, other-worldly:

[...] the same is true of theological compendia, in which the main part is not in fact proper religious knowledge, [but rather] that which is only knowledge of the psychological path or the way to produce certain states of the soul, according to the basic principle that in fact repentance and return to God are the most important thing. To these, one is led through the most unexpected meanders, and therefore it is not surprising if one loses ‘oneself’ too much in them, in order to reach the actual set goal. This thought of improvement and of the way to attain it is so stretched out, divided in so many stages, endowed with so many foreign names – they express only one thing, but being so foreign and so different they seem to contain such mysteries and important things, from *gratia applicatrix* to *unio mystica* – that one does not recognize in it the simplest things any more. If one looks at these things in daylight with healthy eyes, one can only be ashamed that all this sophistication and erudition should be employed for something that can be understood with common sense in a mere quarter of an hour [...].¹¹

For Hegel, the expression *unio mystica* is simply a linguistic affectation of the theologians. It is an expression which – like *gratia applicatrix* – appears to guard all kinds of mysteries and secrets while it remains in fact completely empty. Here too, as in the passage above, Hegel underlines the alienation and sense of estrangement engendered by this theological jargon, which he indirectly compares to the concoctions of the pharmacist, administered to the faithful in lieu of fresh air and clean water,¹² that is to say whatever might nurture their imagination and encourage a healthy approach to “religious knowledge” (*Religionskenntnis*). Just as he opposed

⁹N, 42.

¹⁰Ibid: “Ohrenbeichte, Kirchenbann, Abbüßungen und die ganze Folge dieser entehrende Denkmäler von der Erniedrigung der Menschheit.” Menze rightly notes that according to Hegel in the Bern fragments the methods of persuasion used in Christianity are even more efficient than those used by the State, insofar as they act not only upon external conditions but also, and crucially, directly on the interiority of conscience (Menze (1990), 219).

¹¹N, 43–44: “Man sieht es den theologischen Kompendien an, wo nicht eigentlich Religionskenntnis, [sondern] das, was nur Kenntnis des psychologischen Gangs oder der Art, gewisse Seelenzustände hervorzubringen ist – den Hauptteil ausmacht – dem Grundsatz gemäß, daß eigentlich Buße und Bekehrung das Wichtigste ist – wozu aber durch unerwartetsten Umwege geführt wird, wo es dann kein Wunder ist, wenn man in diesen ‘sich’ zu sehr verliert, um ans eigentliche feste Ziel zu gelangen – dieser Gedanke der Besserung und des Wegs dazu ist so ausgesponnen, in so viele Stationen abgeteilt, mit soviel fremden Namen, die einerlei Sache ausdrücken – aber durch ihre Befremdung und Verschiedenheit wunder welche Geheimnisse und Wichtigkeiten in sich zu halten scheinen, von der *gratia applicatrix* bis zur *unio mystica* hinaus – ausgestattet – daß man die einfachsten Sachen nimmer darin erkennt, und wenn man die Sachen mit gesunden Augen beim Lichte betrachtet, sich schämen muß, daß alle diese Kunst und Gelehrsamkeit für eine Sache aufgewendet ist, die der gemeine Menschenverstand in einer Viertelstunde begreift”.

¹²Ibid., 43.

the division and estrangement produced by Christian religion to the harmony of the Greek world, Hegel opposes here the distance induced by the obscure language of the theologians to the clarity of vision induced by light, and the artificiality of medicine to the natural authenticity of air and water. Like confession and penitence, *unio mystica* belongs to a set of practices that have brought about both the degradation and the humiliation of humanity. By averting the gaze from that which is immediately perceptible and turning it toward the heavens (toward the supernatural heights of the theological compendia, to a *mystical union* as exotic sounding as it is devoid of content) the worldliness of humanity is lost, crushed under the weight of a powerful and alienating religion.

When Hegel generically accuses the theological compendia of using an alienating and vacuous vocabulary, it is very probable that he had one particular compendium in mind: Sartorius's *Compendium theologiae dogmaticae*, a seminal work for students of the Tübingen *Stift* during the years in which Hegel was there.¹³ The *Catalogus laborum tam ecclesiasticorum quam claustralium, quos suis justo ordine circulis digestos susceperere Stipendii Theologici Repetentes, coeptus d. 19. Sept. 1762*, provides detailed reports on the topics chosen for each session, and the *Magistri Repetenten* (or simply *Repetenten*) in charge of guiding them. A closer look at the catalogue is particularly illuminating with respect to the problem of *unio mystica*. Indeed, on 16 September 1792, the title selected for the *locus* is *De unione mystica*.¹⁴ Here too the source is Sartorius's compendium, *locus XXI (De unione credentium mystica cum Deo)*.¹⁵ In Hegel's years at the *Stift* (the *loci theologici* were not part of the curriculum during the first 2 years of study, which were considered preparatory), the *locus De unione mystica* is discussed only on this one occasion, whereas the *locus De gratia applicatrice* is discussed three times. In the *Compendium theologiae dogmaticae*, the *loci XIV (De gratia applicatrice)* to *XXI (De sanctificatione)* are particularly important, forming together the so-called *Ordo salutis* – the section of traditional dogmatics that is devoted to the study and understanding of the meaning of Christian salvation from the perspective of the individual. In the margins of a study dating back to this period, Hegel notes that the discussion of the *Ordo salutis* takes up a considerable number of pages in the theological treatises (once again, his direct reference is to Sartorius) and should, as a result, be considered an essential part of traditional dogmatics.¹⁶ His particular concern for this group of *loci* notwithstanding – the reading of which may well have influenced his later

¹³ Though the author is never cited by Hegel directly, Sartorius's compendium doubtless played an important role in the education of the young philosopher (see Brecht and Sandberger (1969), 72–73). As Düsing has noted, it is probable that Hegel relied principally upon Sartorius's compendium to develop his distinction between subjective and objective religion. Indeed, this distinction recurs frequently in Hegel's early writings (Düsing (1973), 69, also cited by Jaeschke (1983), 43). See also Leube (1954), 5.

¹⁴ On *unio mystica*, in particular on the success of this Latin expression in the Middle Ages, see Haas (2004), 48–63, in particular 59.

¹⁵ See also Tassi (2003), 32.

¹⁶ See GW 1, 76: "[...] diß sieht man noch allen Compendien der Theologie [an], wo die **loci** von **loco de gratia** bis zur **unio mystica** einen so grossen wichtigen Theil einnehmen".

approach to the difference between subjective and objective religion¹⁷ – it should not be forgotten that Hegel is very critical of Christian dogmatics in his early writings. His attack on the empty affectations of the theological compendia reveals this quite plainly.¹⁸

Here again, there are no signs in this fragment of a desire to tackle the role of *mysticism* directly: the few references in the fragments considered here are integrated into the context outlined above, and thus the meaning of the mystical phenomenon is left entirely unaddressed. *Mysticism* (*Mystik*) and *unio mystica* are employed critically and ironically, on the one hand to pinpoint the tendency of Christian religion to displace the attention of the faithful toward the super-natural and other-worldly (to the point that the faithful completely lose touch with the world around them) and, on the other, to expose the vague and vacuous nature of theological language, in spite of its technical appearance.

In the fourth and perhaps the most important fragment of the same collection, the framework is developed but remains substantially the same. The adjective *mystical* (*mystisch*) and the expression *unio mystica* reoccur.¹⁹ In the first version of the text,²⁰ Hegel turns again to the contrast between the *joyous* imagination of the Greeks and its *cheerless* Christian counterpart, which tends to transfer the coordinates of moral conduct onto a world to come and onto representations of a supernatural universe. The characteristics of the representations upon which Christian other-worldly doctrines are founded are, for Hegel, as follows:

I need only to refer to the representations both of the rewards (which were set upon mystical beatifications, childish, frivolous presumptions and based on immoral pride), and of the punishments (which were pictured even more eloquently than the rewards in flamboyant and sensuous images – from the tortures of hell, where the devil eternally torments the soul with inexhaustible inventiveness, eternally, without hope of salvation); it is no wonder that these fantasies have destroyed many a man, subdued by the violence of such representations, and that they have pushed many men to desperation and frenzy.²¹

¹⁷ See Tassi (2003), 73.

¹⁸ For Brecht and Sandberger this Hegelian critique refers directly to the precepts of the *Ordo salutis* (Brecht and Sandberger (1969), 78). It is hardly necessary to recall that the early Hegelian critique of Christian dogmatics changes substantially in the later writings, especially with respect to the role and meaning of the figure of Christ (for a detailed analysis of these changes, see Küng (1970)).

¹⁹ According to Mirri this fragment is to be considered “without doubt the most important” (see Hegel (1989), 41).

²⁰ Mirri (in Hegel (1989), 41) highlights that the two drafts are substantially the same in content. Only in the second however, does the expression *unio mystica* appear again.

²¹ N, 54: “Ich brauche mich nur auf die Vorstellungen zu berufen – teils der Belohnungen, die in mystische Seligkeiten, kindische, tändelnde oder auf einem unmoralischen Stolze beruhende Verzüge gesetzt wurden – teils der Strafen, die noch beredter als die Belohnungen ausgemalt durch ihre grellen, sinnlichen Bilder – von den Qualen der Hölle, wo der Teufel mit immer neuer Erfindungskraft die Seele ewig ohne Hoffnung der Errettung, ewig, ewig peinigt – manche Phantasie, wie nicht zu verwundern, die unter der Gewalt dieser Vorstellungen erlegen, zerrüttet, viele Menschen zur Verzweiflung zur Raserei gebracht haben.”

The supernatural world imagined by the devoted Christian is split in two: the positive pole of “mystical beatitudes” (“mystische Seligkeiten”) on the one hand, the negative pole represented by the Devil and the infernal abyss on the other: a vision as dichotomous as it is lacking in harmony. This opposition between virtue and damnation is structured to inspire either fear of punishment (the flames of hell versus the excessive joy of Bacchic rites), or a desire for reward grounded in an altogether childish conception of virtue, simply conceived as the mirror opposite of damnation. Here too the term *mystisch* is used to refer to a separation, and it is important to note that Hegel juxtaposes the terms *mystical*, *infantile*, *frivolous* (*mystisch*, *kindisch*, *tändelnd*) with great irony. The positive pole (the aspiration to virtue) and the negative pole (the flight from divine punishment) are in reality so far apart that they too would essentially be devoid of meaning were it not for the fact that this representational structure has a specific effect on Christian believers.

In the second draft of this fragment, the sense of alienation that the young Hegel considered so characteristic of Christianity is explicitly associated with the *unio mystica*. Here, the latter expression is not only portrayed as an abstruse formulation relayed by the theological compendia but is also described as an important, albeit ambiguous, element of Christian doctrine itself. Appearing only parenthetically in Hegel’s explanation of the German term *Einwohnen*, or *inhabitation*, this expression is used to refer to the divine action of entering and settling into a person, of pervading from within. While Hegel’s analysis seems to concur with accounts of Divine union (one might think of Meister Eckhart), in reality the heart of Hegel’s problem in this passage lies elsewhere. Hegel’s fleeting reference to the mystical tradition neither opens, nor seeks to open, a new horizon or a new form of dialogue with this tradition. To illustrate this point, it is worth quoting this particular passage in full:

Why are examples of men not enough for us, to strengthen us in the battle for virtue, to feel the divine spark within us, the strength, which lies in us, to become masters over the sensual? Why are we so unable to recognize that virtuous men are flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, and that they too feel the moral sympathy that is this spirit of our spirit, strength of our strength? – Alas! They have convinced us that these abilities are foreign to us, that man belongs simply together with all natural beings, and is indeed more corrupt than them – the idea of sanctity has been isolated completely, and attributed solely to a distant being, and its association with the limitations of a sensual nature was held to be impossible. If moral perfection were to be attributed to it, then it would not be a part of our own being, rather its action within us would be possible only through a connection with that essence of all essences itself, occasioned by way of its inhabitation in us (*unio mystica*). This degradation of human nature does not allow us to recognize ourselves in virtuous men at all [...].²²

²² Ibid., 67: “Warum reichen uns Beispiele von Menschen nicht hin, uns im Kampf der Tugend zu stärken, den göttlichen Funken in uns, die Kraft, die in uns liegt, über das Sinnliche Meister zu werden, zu fühlen? Warum erkennen wir in tugendhaften Menschen nicht, daß sie nicht nur Fleisch von unserm Fleisch, Bein von unserm Bein, sondern fühlen auch die moralische Sympathie, daß dies Geist von unserm Geist, Kraft von unserer Kraft ist? – Ach man hat uns überredet, daß diese Vermögen fremdartig, daß der Mensch nur in die Reihe der Naturwesen, und zwar verdorbener gehöre – man hat die Idee der Heiligkeit gänzlich isoliert, und allein einem fernen Wesen beigelegt, sie mit der Einschränkung unter eine sinnliche Natur für unvereinbar gehalten; – wenn daher dieser moralische Vollkommenheit zugeschrieben werden könnte, so würde sie nicht einen Teil unseres eigenen Wesens ausmachen, sondern nur durch Verbindung jenes Wesens aller Wesen selbst mit

Hegel's polemical intention is absolutely clear: it is under the influence of Christianity that men cling to the idea of a fallen and corrupt humanity and, for this reason, to the idea that every virtue must necessarily come from outside, or rather from an external being. Humans are forever barred from recognizing virtue among their own kind, and all worldly virtues are inevitably transformed into other-worldly virtues accessible only through the action of the "essence of all essences". Indeed, according to Christian teaching, the action through which the Divine communicates its perfection to mortal human beings comes in the form of an intervention external to human nature itself, since it is an action carried out by an external deity endowed with every virtue upon a human being who is deficient and needy. This dwelling²³ of God in man corresponds to a moment of alienation (a "degradation of human nature") in which humans lose touch not only with their own nature but also with the worldly reality of their essence and with the true nature of virtue. This process of estrangement is, once again, performed by a corrupted imagination: "Alas! They have convinced us", writes Hegel, testifying to the persuasive force of the representative structures that Christian doctrine has created around the faithful. In the first of the two aforementioned fragments in which the expression *unio mystica* is used, the latter is referred to as a foreign, extraneous expression: theologians like to use Latin terminology for the aura of mystery generated by words in foreign tongues and for the effect of such words on those to whom the language is unfamiliar. In the second fragment, however, the expression is not only defined as a "foreign word" but also as an estranging action. Hegel uses the adjective *foreign* (*fremdartig*) to express his regret about man's refusal to recognize the human side of virtue and therefore his incapacity to attain it. Indeed, in the German text the recurrence of a single etymological root is evident: *Befremdung*, *Entfremdung*, *fremd*, *fremdartig*.²⁴ In English, *fremdartig* finds its closest equivalent in the terms *foreign* and *alien*, but the meaning here is double: while the natural tendency to identify virtue among one's own kind is reshaped by Christianity into a *foreign* property or capacity, that is to say *unnatural*, this displacement provokes a state of *alienation* in which human beings become *estranged* from their own selves.²⁵

It is now clear why the *unio mystica* to which Hegel refers in these fragments bears no relation whatsoever to the union with the Divine described in the mystical tradition and by Eckhart in particular. Though both cases involve an *Einwohnen*, for Hegel this *Einwohnen* takes on the violent character of an imposition, less of God on man than of Christian doctrine on the imagination of the faithful. Even if the

uns, durch sein Einwohnen in uns (*unio mystica*) sein Wirken in uns möglich sein. – Diese Erniedrigung der menschlichen Natur erlaubt es uns also nicht, in tugendhaften Menschen uns selbst wieder zu erkennen". According to Tassi (2003), 97, this very passage betrays a "generic Eckhartian influence".

²³ On *Einwohnen* and the *locus dogmaticus de unio mystica* see also Tassi (1998), 211–212.

²⁴ On the opposition between the alienation caused by Christianity and the harmonious relationship of man with God in Greek religion see also Asveld (1953), 104. For a discussion of the meaning of *Entfremdung* in the *Phenomenology*, see Massolo (1969), 81–91.

²⁵ On *unio mystica* as *Entfremdung* see Schmidt (1997), 57–58.

fragment drawn from the *Kirchengeschichte* of Mosheim, that Hegel transcribes in a notebook of the Bern years, can be taken as a sign of his interest in the mystical question of the fusion of the human and the divine, the absence of any reference to Eckhart with respect to *unio mystica* suggests that the young Hegel was not particularly well acquainted with the latter's works.

The recurrences of the terms *mystical* (*mystisch*) and *unio mystica* in the *Fragments on Popular Religion and Christianity* do not, moreover, indicate that Hegel was attempting to tackle the philosophical significance and complexity of mysticism directly. Indeed, as we have seen, Hegel uses these terms sporadically and, more importantly, in the context of a wider political and social critique. Besides, as Mirri has noted, the Bern fragments are replete with “fumbles, [...] omissions [...], imbalances [...], repeated attempts to provide definitions [...], lexical variations [...], repetitions”²⁶ and, in the absence of any overarching discourse, Hegel's allusions to mysticism are also affected by this fragmentary approach. Union with the Divine is characterized rather vaguely as an element of the Christian imagination: a *cheerless* and alienating representation, akin to other Christian images and symbols such as fantasies of hell and of the Devil. Hegel is less interested in the union with the Divine as a mystical experience, than in the sense of estrangement and of the supernatural it creates in the Christian imagination and its consequences. This mystical approach has absolutely nothing in common with a philosophical way of “coming close to God”, but consists rather in a misconception by which the human is left behind.²⁷

After this decisive attack in the Bern fragments, Hegel seems to abandon the expression *unio mystica* almost entirely: it is not mentioned again in the so-called *Jugendschriften* (*Early Writings*), and reappears only fleetingly in a short passage of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. The term reappears in a different context and with no polemical intent, but this should come as no surprise considering how much time had passed between the writing of the two texts, and the significant evolution of Hegel's thought.²⁸ In fact, the mystical union with the Divine is considered in a passage of the lectures which is key to the overall argumentative structure of the latter, namely the final pages of the third part of the text (*The Absolute Religion*), where the relationship of the individual to the religious community, which at this point takes the shape of the Church, is discussed. The term therefore appears for the second time almost at the apex of the path outlined in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Here it is used to refer to a particular phenomenon: the real and tangible presence of the Divine in the rite of the Eucharist, as perceived by the faithful taking part in the ceremony. In the bread of the Eucharist, God is experienced as present in

²⁶ See Hegel (1989), 25.

²⁷ On this subject see Massolo (1973), 50. Massolo draws attention to the fact that in several letters dating back to the Bern years Hegel refers to a text in which he examines the problem of “what it might mean to come close to God” (“was es heissen könne, sich Gott zu nähern”) although, the author hastens to add, the fragment in question is almost impossible to track down.

²⁸ Hegel held four courses on the philosophy of religion during the Berlin years: 1821, 1824, 1827, and 1831 (see Verra (1988), 175).

an immediate and concrete way and the faithful undergo a *unio mystica*, an experience of total fusion when they eat the consecrated bread.²⁹ God's presence or actuality (*Gegenwärtigkeit*) is incorporated into the bread, and in this way the act of eating is transformed into a moment of real *appropriation* (*Aneignung*) of God: this is to say that the faithful consciously experience God's proximity to them and can thereby unite with him. The divine presence is felt, and this presence is transformed into union (*Vereinigung*) upon consumption of the divine food. By eating the bread, moreover, the faithful become conscious of their reconciliation with God ("Versöhnung mit Gott")³⁰ and this allows Hegel to reformulate the *unio mystica* in terms of a return of the Spirit (alluding to the Holy Spirit) to the interiority of consciousness, or of a dwelling of Spirit in man.

In this new context, mystical union no longer appears as a form of alienation. On the contrary, it comes to represent a crucial moment in Hegel's philosophy of religion: the moment in which man, in his singularity, grasps the meaning of being reconciled with God. Here too however, as in *Fragments on Popular Religion and Christianity*, Hegel does not refer to the mystical tradition of union with God, but introduces his discussion into an entirely new context. While in his early writings *unio mystica* represented a leap of faith, a way of searching for the supernatural origins of entirely natural phenomena, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* the feeling of union with God represents a moment of knowledge, an experience through which the believer becomes conscious of the unfolding of Spirit itself and of his or her own role therein. It should be noted that the meaning of the verb *to inhabit* (*einwohnen*) – used in both texts to refer to the action of the Divine in the process of *unio mystica* – has changed. In the earlier fragments, Hegel uses the verb *einwohnen* to denounce the alienating effects of attributing a divine origin to actions that are actually human: God's dwelling in man refers to the latter's – perhaps imaginary – perception of a foreign and external presence working in and through him. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, in contrast, the presence pervading the individual is not a foreign presence. The inhabitation of Spirit in the subject is, rather, a moment of heightened consciousness in which the latter becomes aware of his or her own union with Spirit; an awakening that is diametrically opposed to the somnolent state described in the Bern fragments.

This radical opposition between the *unio mystica* of Hegel's early writings and the *Versöhnung* of the Berlin lectures is emblematic of the evolution of Hegel's reflection on these topics. If the role of mysticism (*Mystik*) is barely discussed in the *Fragments on Popular Religion and Christianity*, a more detailed study focusing on the mystical moment of divine incarnation already begins in one of the most important early writings, *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate* (*Der Geist des Christentums*

²⁹ See *Werke* 12, 274 (cf. TWA 17, 327): "Das Letzte in dieser Sphäre ist der Genuß dieser Aneignung, der *Gegenwärtigkeit Gottes*. Es handelt sich eben um die bewußte *Gegenwärtigkeit Gottes*, Einheit mit Gott, die *unio mystica*, das Selbstgefühl Gottes. Dieß ist das *Sakrament des Abendmahls*, in welchem auf sinnliche, anschauliche Weise dem Menschen gegeben wird das Bewußtseyn seiner Versöhnung mit Gott, das Einkehren und Innewohnen des Geistes in ihm."

³⁰ On the importance of *Versöhnung* see the works by Rózsa, in particular Rózsa (2005).

und sein Schicksal). Indeed, in this long essay composed between 1798 and 1800, Hegel begins to reflect upon the mystical aspect of the Eucharist, albeit in a complex and contorted manner. Though the expression *unio mystica* never appears in the text, it remains an important piece of the puzzle to understand the meaning and use of the term *mysticism* (*Mystik*), and of the adjective *mystical* in Hegel's early works. An analysis of this text also provides the bases for grasping the evolution of these very concepts and their role in his later writings, with particular attention to the *Phenomenology*, and up to the abovementioned formulation in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (which, as we will see, is not the only one).

Hegel's discussion of the mystical character of the Last Supper in *The Spirit of Christianity* develops around two themes: the "mystical action" ("mystische Handlung") and the "mystical object" ("mystisches Objekt"). Both are indispensable to understanding Hegel's subsequent approach to and interpretation of the role of the mystical phenomenon.³¹

The following section examines Hegel's interpretation of the mystical significance of Christ's action during the Last Supper (that is: breaking the bread and declaring it to be his own body, pouring the wine and declaring it to be his own blood). It will explore the implications of Hegel's definition of the bread as mystical object while remaining aware of the significant variations in meaning that the expression undergoes. Finally, it will consider how Hegel's argument focuses on the difference between Catholic and Protestant understandings of the mystical object, and consider how this reflection is developed and carried to a conclusion in specific passages of his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

1.2 *Mystical Action and Mystical Object*

1.2.1 **Mystical Action and the Difference Between the Mystical and the Symbolic**

In the long text known as *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, Hegel develops a rather different and significantly more structured conception of *mysticism* in contrast to the one presented in the early fragments considered above.³² His approach to

³¹ I discuss this topic in detail, with particular emphasis on the connection between mysticism and symbolism, in Muratori (2013).

³² In his introduction to the English translation of Hegel's early writings, Kroner argues that the passage from the Bern writings to the most important work of the Frankfurt years, *The Spirit of Christianity*, signalled a change as radical as it was far-reaching. Kroner does not hesitate to characterize Hegel's approach in the latter text as *mystical*, while *The Positivity of Christian Religion*, he claims, reveals an attitude of cautious pondering and sober logical reflexion. Three aspects of this interpretation are problematic. First, it supposes that mysticism and logic are symmetrically opposed; a simplistic vision that Hegel himself, I believe, did not endorse. As a result of this assumption, neither the role nor the concept of *mysticism* in the Frankfurt text are adequately understood or analyzed, as mysticism is presupposed as a vague and irrational approach which is absent from the text itself. Finally, Hegel's reflection on the function and limits of mysticism

the problem crystallizes around an analysis devoted to the significance of the Last Supper. The scene plays a particularly important role in the central part of the text, in which Hegel investigates the meaning and manner of Christ's action.³³ Indeed, as Christ bids the apostles farewell, he marks the moment with a ritual gesture through which a powerful and lasting bond is established between him and his disciples. In Hegel's interpretation, this is a bond of love (*Liebe*) and friendship (*Freundschaft*): "Jesus's farewell from his disciples was the celebration of a supper of love. Love is not yet religion, so this supper was not properly a religious action either".³⁴ The act of eating together gives rise to a feeling of *union* (*Vereinigung*) between Jesus and his friends – indeed, we are dealing here with *friends*, not simply followers or disciples – and this union arises through a revelation of love. In fact, the communal meal represents precisely the shared experience of this love: "But in a supper of love, love itself lives and manifests itself".³⁵ The action performed by Christ is not therefore, or not yet in Hegel's terms, a religious action since to become the object of religious adoration a union must first become objective through the imagination. The Last Supper does not consist in the adoration of an object, but in the establishing of a bond of friendship: the power of this bond is made effective by the master through the action of sharing out the bread and drinking from the same cup. Hegel immediately goes on to acknowledge, however, that the meaning of the Last Supper *oscillates* in fact between the image of a communal meal in which friendship itself

should not be confused with Hegel's own stance with respect to mysticism: it is inaccurate to conclude, as does Kroner, that Hegel himself was a Christian mystic. By examining the occurrences of the term *mysticism* in *The Spirit of Christianity*, the present section aims to show the range and variety of Hegel's early reflexions on the problem of mysticism, thereby avoiding such facile simplifications (see ETW, 8: "Hegel's thinking was as strikingly altered as his style. The author of *The Spirit of Christianity* was no longer the cautiously pondering and soberly reasoning representative of the Age of Enlightenment. He was a Christian mystic, seeking adequate speculative expression"). Beiser (2005), 132, takes his cue from Kroner, defining *The Spirit of Christianity* as "the work of a religious mystic, of a repentant rationalist who has been newly converted to the higher realms of religious experience". Lamb (1980), 173–174, on the other hand, rightly underlines Kroner's mistake (Hegel cannot be defined as a Christian mystic, and *The Spirit of Christianity* cannot be considered the expression of a generic mystical-religious tendency either). He too, however, falls into the same trap when he concludes that "There is little doubt that Hegel was hostile to mysticism, just as he was hostile to any other short cut in philosophy" (ibid., 225). Although, in the *Preface* to *Phenomenology*, Hegel launches an attack on the type of mysticism that seeks a shortcut to the Absolute, this is not the only way of understanding mysticism in his view. In fact, this is the least relevant type of mysticism for Hegel, though the most in vogue in the early nineteenth century. These themes will be analysed in more detail below, Chap. 2, Sect. 2.

³³ On the differences between the didactic approaches of Socrates and Christ and the manner in which they relate to their disciples, see the second fragment of *Popular Religion and Christianity* (N, 30–35). See also Pöggeler (1990), 68–111, in particular 101.

³⁴ N, 297: "Der Abschied, den Jesus von seinen Freunden nahm, war die Feier eines Mahls der Liebe; Liebe ist noch nicht Religion, dieses Mahl also auch keine eigentliche religiöse Handlung". Hamacher's commentary of this extract underlines the fact that the supper itself represents a moment of passage, from the subjectivity of love to its objectivation in ritual (Hamacher (1978), 117). On the role of *Liebe*, see below (Chap. 2, Sect. 1.2.2).

³⁵ N, 297: "bei einem Mahl der Liebe aber lebt und äußert sich die Liebe selbst".

is consumed, and a genuinely religious act. The faithful, repeating the action of Christ in his memory, perform the gestures of a fully religious ritual.³⁶ Before turning to analyze its meaning, Hegel thus cautions the reader that the “spirit” of Christ’s Supper with the disciples is by no means easy to grasp.³⁷

Hegel proceeds with particular attention to the notion of *Vereinigung*, or union in Christ. The apostles become one through the sharing of food, forming a *Gemeinschaft* (a *community*, but also an *alliance*, a *confraternity*) around the figure of Christ, a community best represented through the image of a sphere whose central point is Christ:

The association with Jesus, their mutual friendship, and unification in their focal point, their teacher, are not merely felt; but when Jesus describes the bread and wine as his body and blood offered for them, then the unification is no longer merely felt, but has become visible. It is not only represented in an image, an allegorical figure, but it is linked to something real, given and tasted in a real thing, the bread.³⁸

The sense of union does not remain solely on the level of feeling, of image or of allegorical figure, but becomes tangible and real because it is incorporated into something objective, in the bread and wine that Christ calls his own body and blood. As the participants share out and consume these substances, the union is perceived by each of them as actually happening.

The key passage for understanding the role of the bread and the wine in this text is the visible occurrence of the union in Christ. On the one hand, the bread and the wine are the union itself made comestible and thus entirely transformed into something tangible; on the other hand, that which is not visible in the action performed by Christ is also of great importance. The mystical core of the scene resides in this balancing between becoming visible and remaining invisible. Hegel’s argument proceeds as follows:

On the one hand, then, the sensation becomes objective, but on the other hand this bread and wine, and the action of sharing it out, are at the same time not merely objective. There is more in this action than is visible: it is a mystical action. A spectator who had not known of

³⁶In *The Spirit of Christianity*, Hegel is concerned above all with the mystical meaning of the rite of the Last Supper, but the implications of his theory for the interpretation of the ecclesiastic rite, namely the reenactment of Christ’s action in his memory, are already clear.

³⁷See N, 297: “Aber bei dem Mahle der Liebe kommt doch auch Objektives vor, an welches die Empfindung geknüpft, aber nicht in Ein Bild vereinigt ist, und darum schwebt dies Essen zwischen einem Zusammenessen der Freundschaft und einem religiösen Akt, und dieses Schweben macht es schwer, seinen Geist deutlich zu bezeichnen.” The verb *schweben* signifies to oscillate, to fluctuate. It thus refers to an uncertain movement composed of an outward journey and a return, in such a way that the meaning of the Last Supper remains suspended between two possible interpretations without ever falling back unequivocally into one or the other.

³⁸Ibid., 297–298: “Die Gemeinschaft mit Jesu, ihre Freundschaft untereinander, und die Vereinigung derselben in ihrem Mittelpunkt, ihrem Lehrer, wird nicht bloß gefühlt; sondern indem Jesu das an alle auszuteilende Brot und Wein seinen für sie gegebenen Leib und Blut nennt, so ist die Vereinigung nicht mehr bloß empfunden, sondern sie ist sichtbar geworden, sie wird nicht nur in einem Bilde, einer allegorischen Figur vorgestellt, sondern an ein Wirkliches angeknüpft, in einem Wirklichen, dem Brote, gegeben und genossen.”

their friendship and had not understood Jesus's words would have seen nothing else than the sharing out of some bread and wine and the tasting of them.³⁹

The action of Christ (Hegel uses the word *Handlung* rather than *Tat*)⁴⁰ has both an objective and an *objectifying* effect, since it transfers the meaning of the union from the disciples and the community onto an external entity amenable to division and distribution. Here, however, Hegel's argument takes an unexpected turn: Christ's action does not limit itself to these effects, since there is more to it than what is visible. This crucial observation allows Hegel to conclude that "it is a mystical action". The complex evolution of the notion of "mystical action" in the central pages of this text must be reconstructed to determine what Hegel means here by *mystical*.

First of all, the adjective "mystical" appears in the context of an oscillation between the visible and the invisible, and therefore describes something that cannot fully be grasped by the senses, but remains in fact partly hidden.⁴¹ By 'hidden' Hegel does not, however, mean *secret*. Indeed, the mystical meaning of the action of Christ remains impenetrable only to those who do not take part in the ritual. The external spectator, not privy to the context of the scene, would see only a man sharing a piece of bread.⁴² A mystical action, therefore, must both be understood and shared. Such an action is, one might conclude, intended for a small community. Indeed, the whole of Christ's teachings are, for the Hegel of *The Spirit of Christianity*, intended for a select group of people and cannot be extended to a wider community (in the founding of a state, for example) without falling prey to a number of internal contradictions. The mystical character of the simple, communal act of breaking the bread can be grasped only by those to whom Christ has spoken and who have understood the meaning of his words. Only in this way can an apparently ordinary gesture be transformed into a

³⁹Ibid., 298: "Einerseits wird also die Empfindung objektiv, andererseits aber ist dies Brot und Wein und die Handlung des Austeilens zugleich nicht bloß objektiv, es ist mehr in ihr, als gesehen wird; sie ist eine mystische Handlung; der Zuschauer, der ihre Freundschaft nicht gekannt und die Worte Jesu nicht verstanden hätte, hätte nichts gesehen, als das Austeilen von etwas Brot und Wein und das Genießen derselben".

⁴⁰On the difference between *Handlung* and *Tat* see *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, Zweiter Abschnitt. Die Absicht und das Wohl*, in particular paragraphs 119–121.

⁴¹Evidence of Hegel's concern for mysticism in the texts following the early writings may be found in the Jena *Vorlesungsmanuskripte zur Philosophie der Natur und des Geistes*, in which Hegel argues that the burying of a seed so that a plant may grow is a "mystical action" ("mystische Handlung"). Indeed, this action allows the "secret forces" ("geheime Kräfte") present in the seed to manifest themselves in the birth of a shoot. Like in *The Spirit of Christianity* where Hegel maintains that *there is more to Christ's action than meets the eye*, here the buried seed "is, in truth, something quite different to what is present to the senses". (See Hegel (1969), 125).

⁴²See di Giovanni and Harris (2000), 381. Harris highlights Hegel's conscious use of the adjective *mystic* in the etymological sense and in accord with the mysteries of Ancient Greece rather than as a synonym for *obscure*: "The word 'mystic' comes to us from the Greek Mysteries; and Hegel always insisted both on the importance of the 'mystic' component in Greek religion, and in the fact that there was nothing 'obscure' about it". The same reasoning can be applied to the *mystical* character of the Last Supper that is not understood by Hegel in the sense of an impenetrable and incomprehensible darkness, but rather as a mystery that must be understood and revealed. I will return to this important distinction below (Chap. 2, Sect. 3.1).

mystical one. As we have seen, moreover, the mystical act is two-sided: it reveals and conceals at the same time, and is more or less grasped and evident depending on the point of view of the onlooker. If breaking a ring between two friends, so that each may preserve and cherish a part as a sign of the other's friendship, is also a *mystical* action – writes Hegel shortly after – there too, the external spectator would only see a broken ring, without being able to grasp “das Mystische der Stücke” – the element of mysticism contained in each part of the object.⁴³

If, however, the ritual breaking of a ring between two friends and the ritual action performed by Christ during the Last Supper are so comparable (the example of the ring is given immediately after the discussion of the union of the master and his disciples), it may be asked what remains of the specific meaning of the term *mysticism* in this text, and indeed whether or not it is used in a special sense. It is tempting to suggest that Hegel simply uses the term *mystisch* as a synonym of *symbolisch*. Indeed, in a passage of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* pertaining to the character of Greek myths, Hegel provides the following definition of the *symbolical*: “the meaning is different from the external presentation”.⁴⁴ In the case of the Last Supper, too, the true meaning does not lie solely in its *external presentation*, that is to say in the sharing out of the bread, but also in the additional, intimate meaning – disclosed only to the disciples – *internal* to this representation, namely the bond of love and friendship shared with Christ. In addition, in *The Spirit of Christianity*, Hegel refers to the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine as symbolic actions (“symbolische Handlungen”) through which union with Christ may be achieved.⁴⁵ It would appear then that the expressions “mystical action” and “symbolic action” are simply used in the same way, and it would have to be concluded that Hegel develops no actual philosophical reflection on mysticism in this text any more than he does in *Popular Religion and Christianity*, 5 or 6 years earlier. This, however, is only partially true.

Hegel's text is not without incongruities, and certain terms are used repeatedly to mean slightly or even sometimes radically different things. This text is, in fact, best approached as a sort of testing ground on which Hegel experiments with several lines of thought.⁴⁶ In the case of the two terms *mystical* and *symbolical*, a number of tentative definitions and shades of meaning can be seen to converge around the two words, revealing not only the terminological hesitations of the young philosopher but also his conscious attempt to reflect upon the elusive and impenetrable nature of the Last Supper from a linguistic point of view. Certain recurrent structures can nonetheless

⁴³ Ibid., 298: “so wie denn scheidende Freunde einen Ring brachen, und jeder ein Stück behielt, der Zuschauer nichts sieht, als das Zerbrechen eines brauchbaren Dinges und das Teilen in unbrauchbare, wertlose Stücke; das Mystische der Stücke hat er nicht gefaßt.”

⁴⁴ *Werke* 12, 125 (cf. TWA 17, 150): “*symbolisch*, d. h. die Bedeutung ist eine andere als die äußere Darstellung.”

⁴⁵ See N, 300: “in der symbolischen Handlung soll das Essen und Trinken – und das Gefühl des Einssein in Jesu Geist zusammenfließen”.

⁴⁶ This can also be said of the *Jugendschriften* in their entirety. The term *mystisch* is used in many ways and often in very different contexts, and can thus be considered an example of how Hegel worked with concepts and with language in the early years of his philosophical trajectory.

be identified if one follows Hegel's use of these two terms attentively; at the same time some important lines of reasoning emerge, which will be discussed below.

First of all, Hegel gives an example of what he considers a typical symbolic action, namely John the Baptist's custom of baptizing with water. In this particular case, Hegel's argument is absolutely clear: the action is symbolic, not mystical. We can conclude from this example that the two terms are not entirely synonymous for Hegel, though they do retain a certain affinity that has to be clarified. Describing John's custom of baptizing, Hegel writes:

John's custom (no such action is known to have been performed by Jesus) of completely immersing in water those educated in his spirit, is a significantly symbolic one. There is no feeling so homogeneous to the desire for the infinite, the longing to overflow into the infinite, than the desire to sink into a plenitude of water. The person who immerses himself has something foreign before him, which immediately flows all the way around him, makes itself felt at each point of his body. He is taken away from the world, the world is taken away from him; he is only felt water that touches him where he is, and he exists only there where he feels it. In the plenitude of water there is no gap, no limitation, no multiplicity or determination; the feeling of it is the most undispersed, the simplest; after the immersion, the person returns up to the air, separates himself from the mass of water, is already divided from it, but the water still drips from him everywhere. As it leaves him, the world around him becomes determinate again and he re-enters, invigorated, the multiplicity of consciousness. Looking out into the unshaded blue and the simple, formless plane of an eastern horizon, the surrounding air is not felt, and the play of thoughts is something other than that looking out. In the person immersed there is only One feeling, and the forgetting of the world, a solitude, which has cast everything away from itself, has disentangled itself from everything.⁴⁷

Hegel provides a key to understanding the nature of symbolic action and its difference from mystical action in the passing remark at the beginning of the passage, in which it is stressed that the custom of baptizing with water belonged solely to John, and not to Christ. In my view, the seeds of the distinction between the purely symbolic action of John and the mystical action of Christ are already present in this remark.⁴⁸

⁴⁷N, 319: "Die Gewohnheit des Johannes (von Jesu ist keine solche Handlung bekannt), die zu seinem Geist Erzeugenen in Wasser unterzutauchen, ist eine bedeutende symbolische. Es gibt kein Gefühl, das dem Verlangen nach dem Unendlichen, dem Sehnen, in das Unendliche überzufließen, so homogen wäre als das Verlangen, sich in einer Wasserfülle zu begraben; der Hineinstürzende hat ein Fremdes vor sich, das ihn sogleich ganz umfließt, an jedem Punkte seines Körpers sich zu fühlen gibt; er ist der Welt genommen, sie ihm; er ist nur gefühltes Wasser, das ihn berührt, wo er ist, und er ist nur, wo er es fühlt; es ist in der Wasserfülle keine Lücke, keine Beschränkung, keine Mannigfaltigkeit oder Bestimmung; das Gefühl derselben ist das unzerstreuteste, einfachste; der Untergetauchte steigt wieder in die Luft empor, trennt sich vom Wasserkörper, ist von ihm schon geschieden, aber er trieft noch allenthalben von ihm; sowie es ihn verläßt, nimmt die Welt um ihn wieder Bestimmtheit an, und er tritt gestärkt in die Mannigfaltigkeit des Bewußtseins zurück. Im Hinaussehen in die unschattierte Bläue und die einfache gestaltenlose Fläche eines morgenländischen Horizontes wird die umgebende Luft nicht gefühlt, und das Spiel der Gedanken ist etwas anderes als das Hinaussehen. Im Untergetauchten ist nur Ein Gefühl, und die Vergessenheit der Welt, eine Einsamkeit, die alles von sich geworfen, allem sich entwunden hat."

⁴⁸Baum does not differentiate between symbolic and mystical action and therefore considers baptism, as described by Hegel in *The Spirit of Christianity*, as a mystical experience (see Baum (1976), 95). The habit of taking *mystisch* and *symbolisch* as synonyms in Hegel's early writings can be traced back to Rosenkranz (HL, 50). It should be noted that Schelling makes a clear distinction between the *symbolic* and the *mystical* meaning of baptism (see Schelling (1859), vol. 5, 434).

Describing the symbolic characteristics of baptism, Hegel insists on the term *feeling*: immersion in the baptismal water arouses in the baptized a feeling of immersion in a divine totality that embraces and envelops him like the water of the river. The sensation is a physical one, and so – Hegel adds – very simple, such that it disappears as soon as the person reemerges from the water and returns to perceiving the surrounding world. The sense of the total absence of limitations gives way once more to the perceptive variety of dry land. To some extent, then, John's action knowingly hinges on a normal bodily reaction that, of course, does not occur in the rite of the Last Supper, whose enactment is more complex and subtle. According to Hegel, water baptism gives rise to a sensation of perfect, homogeneous fusion with what he terms the *infinite*, yet this sensation remains a simple feeling (more precisely the immersion produces “*one single feeling*”) which is grounded in a momentary oblivion to the world and on the sense of isolation that follows. The “play of thoughts”, Hegel concludes, is something quite different to the simplicity of this experience of losing and finding oneself within and without the flow of water. Feeling (*Gefühl*) also has a fundamental role to play in the ceremony of the Eucharist.⁴⁹ Yet Hegel proposes a very important distinction between two types of feeling when he underlines the absolute simplicity of the feeling brought about by baptism and, in contrast, the importance of the bond of love and friendship that is established between master and disciples. The latter endures long after the ceremony has ended, unlike the feeling of fusion with the Whole when emerging from the water.

There are nevertheless some powerful analogies between the ritual of John and that of Christ. First of all, in both cases the meaning of the ritual remains mysterious to anyone unaware of the context, so that an external spectator would not understand either the meaning of the immersion in water or of the distribution of bread and wine. The actions of both men, moreover, are transformative: while in the first case it is the feelings and perceptions of the baptized that are at the heart of the transformation, in the second it is the bread and the wine that undergo a radical change. And, indeed, the analysis of this transfiguration of the food through Christ's action is the key to the interpretation, the element that marks the radical difference between the symbolism of baptism and the mysticism of the Last Supper.

The transformation effected by the Eucharistic gesture is considerably more complex than that of the baptismal ceremony because the action is exerted on an object (bread and wine). This object, which Hegel describes as *mystical*, is modified so radically that it is able, in turn, to profoundly affect all those who receive and handle it. From mystical action to mystical object, the transition is immediate. The mystical object not only becomes the pivotal point around which the *mystical-symbolical* distinction is articulated, but it also provides the grounds for Hegel's argument on the fundamental difference between Catholicism and Lutheranism. The mystical gesture performed by Christ is repeated by the faithful through a ritual which is centered upon the significance attributed to the mystical object. While,

⁴⁹ N, 299: “sie sind alle Trinkende, ein gleiches Gefühl ist in allen; vom gleichen Geiste der Liebe sind alle durchgedrungen”.

according to the Catholic ritual, God is genuinely present in the bread as a mystical object, for the Protestants the presence of the Divine in the bread is not to be interpreted literally. Though Hegel makes some ironic observations concerning the excessively literal interpretations of God's presence in the Eucharistic bread, as for instance that of the Catholic church during the Middle Ages (which could arrive at the absurd view that even a mouse who eats the fallen crumbs of the consecrated bread must be adored as if it were God himself),⁵⁰ he treads carefully and subtly across the difficult terrain of these two interpretations of the ritual. In fact Hegel's discussion of the significance of the mystical object can be seen as leading him toward a criticism of both the Catholic and the Lutheran rite. For Hegel it is the entire redefinition of the speculative (that is to say of the mystical)⁵¹ problem that is at stake in the ritual itself. The reflection on this problem begins in *The Spirit of Christianity*, and then develops and unfolds in the later texts, in particular in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

In the following section, after examining the development of Hegel's argument on the role of the mystical object, I will consider the implications of the above-mentioned distinction between Catholicism and Lutheranism.

1.2.2 The Mystical Object and Its Contradictions

Hegel explains how the mystical object is to be understood: "But here (as with the mystical pieces of the ring) wine and bread become mystical objects; when Jesus calls them his body and blood, and a pleasure, a sensation immediately accompanies them".⁵² As soon as Christ pronounces the words "take, eat; this is my body", the bread and wine cease to exist as simple everyday objects and become mystical objects. In other words, they take on a new meaning and through this new meaning the faithful are brought to perceive not only the bread as such, but God's son become bread. The body of Christ becomes food to be consumed, and the bread in turn ceases to exist as a simple preparation of flour and water. It is through this trading of places that the mystical object comes into being, through an encounter of two opposing trajectories – the bread into Christ's flesh, and the flesh into bread. This is an actual encounter, unstable and contradictory. For this reason the mystical object is utterly unique, poised on the limit between revelation and concealment where the mystical action unfolds. As the body of Christ reveals itself in the bread, it provokes a momentary withdrawal of the bread as such, and it is this oscillation between revelation and occultation that establishes the *mystical* nature of the object in question.

But when they eat the bread and drink the wine, and his body and his blood pass over into them, Jesus is in them all, and his essence has divinely pervaded them as love. So the bread

⁵⁰ See *Werke* 15, 146 (cf. TWA 19, 538).

⁵¹ See below (Chap. 2, Sect. 3) on the link between speculation and a certain type of mysticism.

⁵² N, 298: "Hier aber werden (wie die mystischen Stücke des Rings) Wein und Brot mystische Objekte; indem Jesus sie seinen Leib und Blut nennt, und ein Genuß, eine Empfindung unmittelbar sie begleitet".

and the wine are not present just for the intellect, [they are not just] an object; the action of eating and drinking is not merely a unification that has taken place between them, caused by the elimination of bread and wine, nor is the sensation a mere tasting of the food and of the liquid. The spirit of Jesus, in which his disciples are one, is for the external feeling present as an object, it has become something real. But the love made objective, this subjective [element] turned into a thing, returns back to its nature, it becomes subjective again in eating. This return can in this respect be roughly compared to the thought which in the written word has become a thing and which in reading regains its subjectivity out of something dead, an object. The comparison would be more striking if the written word were 'read away', if by being understood it were to vanish as a thing. In the same way, in tasting the bread and the wine, not only is the sensation of these mystical objects awakened, not only does the spirit become alive, but the objects themselves disappear as such.⁵³

Christ's words do not only radically alter the object toward which the mystical action is directed, they also trigger a process whereby that very object leaves its immobile and inert nature behind to become the fulcrum of an ongoing movement. As Hegel insists, neither the bread nor the wine remain simple objects as perceived by the intellect, nor are the sensations experienced by those who receive and consume these substances limited to a matter of taste, as would be the case with normal bread and normal wine. The mystical object carries a deeper meaning than its ordinary counterpart, and in the rite of the Last Supper this meaning is represented by the divine love which suffuses the disciples. As they consume the food given to them by Christ, the disciples do not simply taste the food: the very love of Christ for his disciples is incorporated in the two objects and is made tangible to the point of transforming the disciples' physical perception of the object. The transformation which the mystical action brings about is so profound that the external characteristics and physical appearance of both objects lose importance and seem to fade away. Therefore the bread as mystical object is not defined by its external qualities – its flavour, aroma and texture – but it does not for that matter cease to be available to sense-perception. On the contrary, divine love is, so to speak, imprinted into the bread and the efficacy of the ritual ultimately depends upon the fact that the bond of love between Christ and the disciples becomes objective in the bread and thus becomes tangible. While the bread is deprived of its physical qualities, love takes possession of this edible form and thus obtains an exteriority, becoming, in Hegel's analysis, something real.

⁵³Ibid., 299: "indem sie aber das Brot essen und den Wein trinken, sein Leib und sein Blut in sie übergeht, so ist Jesus in allen, und sein Wesen hat sie göttlich, als Liebe durchdrungen. So ist das Brot und der Wein nicht bloß für den Verstand, ein Objekt; die Handlung des Essens und Trinkens nicht bloß eine durch Vernichtung derselben mit sich geschehene Vereinigung, noch die Empfindung ein bloßer Geschmack der Speise und des Tranks; der Geist Jesu, in dem seine Jünger Eins sind, ist für das äußere Gefühl als Objekt gegenwärtig, ein Wirkliches geworden. Aber die objektiv gemachte Liebe, dies zur Sache gewordene Subjektive kehrt zu seiner Natur wieder zurück, wird im Essen wieder subjektiv. Diese Rückkehr kann etwa in dieser Rücksicht mit dem im geschriebenen Worte zum Dinge gewordenen Gedanken verglichen werden, der aus einem Toten, einem Objekte, im Lesen seine Subjektivität wiedererhält. Die Vergleichung wäre treffender, wenn das geschriebene Wort aufgelesen 'würde', durch das Verstehen als Ding verschwände; sowie im Genuß des Brots und Weins von diesen mystischen Objekten nicht bloß die Empfindung erweckt, der Geist lebendig wird, sondern sie selbst als Objekte verschwinden."

The transformation, then, does not truly take place *in* the object but *through* it. The object is not subject to any visible change, but becomes the channel through which divine love can make itself manifest. In this sense, as I have already suggested, the bread is not at the center of the mystical act in static form, rather it becomes the critical and dynamic point at the heart of a dual process, consisting, in Hegel's terms, of an 'outward journey' and a return. The organoleptic and communal characteristics of the bread must be made secondary for Christ's love to be revealed; in fact they must *almost* entirely disappear. This retreat of the object as such is, for Hegel, the first moment of the mystical act, since the empty space generated by this eclipse is the necessary precondition for the advent of a new essence: the feeling of love is objectified while the real communal object seems to disappear. The encounter between these two movements (an advent and a retreat) generates what Hegel calls a "mystical object". Thus, the mystical bread is no longer a mere object but is transformed into a *locus*, a focal point in which God's love can be revealed. Following this revelation of divine love, the mystical action folds in upon itself in a second movement that Hegel calls a *return*, and in so doing brings the action to an end and at the same to completion.

The circularity of the mystical gesture and the modalities of creation and subsequent dissolution of the mystical object can be grasped fully only if the specificity of the withdrawal upon which the Eucharist relies is recognized. A dual disappearance occurs – the object vanishes simultaneously in two different ways. First, the bread and wine disappear insofar as they are consumed, and only by virtue of being so consumed can they act on the consciousness of the faithful who, in this way, become conscious of having eaten the flesh of Christ and drunk his blood. It is this act of consumption that causes a profound sense of union to arise among the disciples, a union both in and with Christ who is the focal point of this feeling. As the mystical bread is divided, so too is the "spirit of Christ", and the sense of union is made real and present through the breaking of the bread: just as a single loaf is divided into as many pieces as there are disciples, the followers of Christ are, conversely, unified in his love and, as Hegel writes, in his spirit.

The physical disappearance of the object through its consumption is accompanied, however, by a second type of disappearance: the object must cease to exist as an ordinary object, in order to reemerge laden with new meaning.⁵⁴ In this second case, the bread disappears only for the disciples or believers who, having projected onto the bread a supernatural agency that can transfigure it from within, see in it something *mystical*. Once again Hegel emphasizes that it is strictly necessary to understand the meaning of the entire ritual: an external spectator not privy to this meaning would continue to see only bread on the table of the Last Supper throughout the whole ritual.

In reality these two interpretations are intricately bound together, though only the second explains why the bread must not only disappear but also revert back to pres-

⁵⁴ It is not by chance that Hegel uses the term *Objekt* and not the term *Gegenstand*. If *Gegenstand* is used to refer to an object both immobile and passive, the mystical object is indeed *Objekt*: a mobile object that undergoes a dynamic series of disappearances and reappearances.

ence: it provides a justification for the necessity of a reverse movement (*Rückkehr*, return) which attests to the object's irreducibility to radical transformation. The mystical object sits precariously on the limit brought about by this contradiction, between the need to disappear (in the dual sense examined above) and the impossibility of losing its own nature and becoming that into which it cannot be transformed, namely God. Although the bread is endowed with mystical meaning, it nonetheless remains as bread, an everyday edible substance, and this is equally important to the ritual. In this way, the bread is present and absent at the same time; or rather, it *tends* to disappear in the eyes of the disciples, only to reassert its material existence in the very moment of its consumption. The mystical object is therefore an inherently unstable object, which goes off-balance as soon as its function has been carried out – which, in the context of the Last Supper, consists in uniting Jesus and his disciples in love and in friendship. The action of Christ (and of those who later perform it in his memory) not only gives the bread and the wine a special meaning, it also triggers a movement of mediation between divine essence and earthly substance, thereby engendering a complex and inherently contradictory encounter.

This contradiction is exposed by Hegel in the passage cited above: “But the love made objective, this subjective [element] turned into a thing, returns back to its nature, it becomes subjective again in eating.” Love's objectivation is the crucial point, indeed the point of collision, in which the whole ritual reaches its apex while already preparing for the movement of return through which the mystical object is transformed once again. The fundamental problem of the incarnation of love (*Liebe*) in the bread of the Eucharist emerges clearly: Christ's love acquires an exteriority by means of its objectivation in the bread (becoming to all intents and purposes a *thing*); yet love is not, by its nature, a thing but a *feeling*.⁵⁵

In the fragment known as *Love (Die Liebe)* and incorporated into the collection entitled *Sketches on Religion and Love (Entwürfe über Religion und Liebe)*,⁵⁶ Hegel defines love as a feeling that unites singular individuals, or lovers. It is indissolubly linked to life (*Leben*), for love can only be shared between living beings.⁵⁷ As in *The Spirit of Christianity* love, in this fragment, is said to act through the creation of a union (*Vereinigung*), though the former discusses the union of Christ with his disciples while the latter is concerned with the union of lovers. In addition, in both texts love is described as a vital, generative force: in *Die Liebe* this generative energy manifests itself through the creation of a third: the child, who becomes for

⁵⁵ Citing Derrida, Jamme and Schneider have described the oscillation of *Liebe* between subjectivity and objectivation in this way (Jamme and Schneider (1990), 34): “Die Liebesgemeinschaft zwischen Jesus und seinen Jüngern findet ihre Vollendung darin, daß sie rein spirituell ist (was Derrida am Abendmahl erörtert, in dem mit dem Trinken des Weins und dem Essen des Brotes die letzten Reste von Materialität verzehrt werden): ‘L’amour – reste intérieur’. Deshalb ist das Abendmahl noch nicht Religion, sondern markiert den Übergang zwischen der Subjektivität der Liebe zu ihrer Objektivation.”

⁵⁶ According to Nohl, these fragments were written in the same period as *The Spirit of Christianity*.

⁵⁷ See N, 379: “Wahre Vereinigung, eigentliche Liebe findet nur unter Lebendigen statt”. For an analysis of *Liebe* in Hegel's early writings, see Melica (2007), 143–167 (in particular part II).

the lovers the sign of the indissolubility of their union in a third being, external to them. In *The Spirit of Christianity* love, the feeling Christ harbors for his disciples, also retains the characteristics of a driving force: its incorporation into the food of the Last Supper sets in motion a transformative process, from inert and static earthly object to dynamic and living mystical object.

Let us return to the crucial passage cited above in which it is said that the love that has become objective reverts back to what it is by nature, namely something subjective, and that this second transformation takes place through the consumption of the object itself, that is to say the bread.⁵⁸ The second part of what might be called the ritual's *mystical process* begins then with an unbalancing. The love that was shared among the disciples in edible form is perceived once again for what it necessarily is: an intangible feeling that can be neither consumed nor objectified. On eating the bread, each disciple suddenly becomes conscious of the fact that Christ's love is not something that can be divided up and consumed: love is a bond, a subjective feeling that brings together specific individuals (as many critics have underlined, this is the reason why love, for the young Hegel, can be conceived neither *as* general nor *in* general).

The union of lovers described in *Die Liebe* is also understood as a moment of instability, both delicate and destined to fall apart. As such, it holds much in common with the union described in the previous text. The union of lovers contains – indeed must contain – within itself the very principle of separation, even if imagined possible only in the death of the individuals: a stable union is possible only through the figure of the child, that is through the creation of a third element external to the lovers, but not in the lovers themselves. Likewise, the union between Christ and his disciples is described in *The Spirit of Christianity* as a fleeting moment of fusion, which already contains within it the seeds of rupture, or of return.⁵⁹

The question of the instability and contradictions of love in the writings of the young Hegel has already been discussed extensively.⁶⁰ Of particular interest here are the implications of this issue to an understanding of the role of the *mystical object* in *The Spirit of Christianity*. The inherent precariousness of love-as-object in fact forms the basis of the inner movement of the mystical object. Indeed, it explains the

⁵⁸ Such is Hamacher's interpretation of the crucial moment of passage represented by the consumption of the divine sustenance: "Der Biß verkürzt die objektive Einheit des Subjektiven auf ihre subjektive Erfahrung und zerstört damit seine eigene Teilhabe an dem, was er ißt." Hamacher (1978) gestures toward a distinction between the case of the Last Supper and that of the ring, but ultimately he too identifies *symbolisch* and *mystisch* (see 122 in particular).

⁵⁹ Love in this text is, as Mirri has rightly suggested, subject to the concept of destiny: it creates a union which is thus inherently problematic and contradictory. Christ's love does not, as those who read the text in an *irrational*, *Romantic* and *mystical* sense maintain, represent the overcoming of all divisions (see Hegel (1989), 367). Love, like the mystical object, cannot bring about a definitive overcoming or a stable union: if love tends toward objectivation in the mystical object it always returns to its initial state as subjective feeling, thereby revealing the impermanence of the objectivation itself.

⁶⁰ See for example Massolo (1973), 76. On the importance of Hegel's first reflections on *Liebe* for the development of his later dialectic see Baum (1986), for example 36.

fragility (which is also a conceptual fragility, as we will see) of this movement, and its oscillation between the poles of revelation and concealment. The fundamental problem of love lies in its inability to become “sufficiently objective”: the love of the lovers cannot succeed, for it cannot maintain the two individuals in perpetual contact and union other than in the figure of the child; nor can the love between Christ and his friends succeed, even when indirectly defined as *divine*.⁶¹ Love is *destined* to slip back onto the terrain of the subjective without being able to persist in conditions of objectification. The mystical object itself undergoes a second transformation, the consequences of which are of particular interest here. The consumption of the bread, which has vanished and yet still remains present as such, triggers a movement of return that in turn causes a second perceptual revolution through which the disciples regain consciousness of the fact that they have eaten only bread, not God himself. Hegel firmly insists on this:

The bread is to be eaten, the wine is to be drunk; therefore they cannot be anything divine. What, on the one hand, they have as an advantage, that the sensation that is attached to them reverts as it were from its objectivity to its own nature, that the mystical object becomes again something merely subjective, this [on the other hand] they lose precisely because love does not become objective enough through them. Something divine, by virtue of being divine, cannot be available in the form of something to be eaten and drunk.⁶²

The words of Christ inaugurate a movement *outwards*, so to speak, through which the faithful are effectively able to see the body of their master in the bread. This movement must be counterbalanced, however, by a movement of *return*, triggered by the act of eating the bread (the bread should be eaten and the wine should be drunk), and leading the disciples back to the perception that it is only bread and wine that they are tasting, not the flesh and the blood of Christ. Once again, the static object is set in motion, since Hegel interprets it as the critical point where two conflicting tendencies meet: the Divine strains toward the object of the Eucharistic rite, and the object recoils in its natural incapacity to fully incorporate the Divine. This contradiction is exposed when the bread is tasted and the temporary objectivity of Christ’s love incarnated in the food retreats, falls apart, revealing what Hegel

⁶¹ N, 299: “sein Wesen hat sie göttlich, als Liebe durchdrungen.”

⁶² Ibid., 300: “Das Brot soll gegessen, der Wein getrunken werden; sie können darum nichts Göttliches sein; was sie auf der einen Seite voraus haben, daß die Empfindung, die an sie geheftet ist, wieder von ihrer Objektivität zu ihrer Natur gleichsam zurückkehrt, das mystische Objekt wieder zu einem bloß Subjektiven wird, das verlieren sie eben dadurch, daß die Liebe durch sie nicht objektiv genug wird. Etwas Göttliches kann, indem es göttlich ist, nicht in der Gestalt eines zu Essenden und zu Trinkenden vorhanden sein.” The Hegelian manuscript reveals an important addition that Hegel later crossed out and eliminated from the text: “Der Moment der Göttlichkeit konnte nur augenblicklich sein, solange die Phantasie die schwere Aufgabe erfüllen kann, in dem Dinge die Liebe festzuhalten” (ibid., 300). The imagination is burdened, in these lines, with the difficult task of holding (*festhalten*) love within the object for as long as possible, that is to say of conceiving of the bread as the genuine incarnation of the bond with Christ. The adverb *augenblicklich*, that Hegel uses to describe the intense instability of this divine incarnation (the duration of this coincidence between God and bread is compared to the “flutter of an eyelash”), intimates that not even the imagination can stabilize the encounter between the objectivity of the bread and the subjectivity of the bond of love with the Divine.

regards as the incontrovertible fact that "something divine, by virtue of being divine, cannot be available in the form of something to be eaten and drunk." This insoluble contradiction is lodged at the very heart of the Eucharistic rite; and yet it is precisely in this hiatus between what is projected onto the mystical object and what this object necessarily remains by nature that the ritual takes place.

Hegel's insistence on the impossibility of a total transformation of the bread into something divine may be attributed in part to the influence of the Lutheran reform, in particular during Hegel's formative years at the *Stift* in Tübingen. If the bread and the wine are central to the Eucharistic rite for the Lutherans, the food does not really *become* the flesh and blood of Christ (as it does in the Catholic rite), for the divine can on no account be consumed by the faithful as food. Hegel's interpretation does not simply coincide with Luther's, however, but reformulates the impossibility of a transformation or complete transferral of the Divine into the bread in a new and surprisingly original way. The question of the role and internal contradictions of the mystical object brings Hegel to reflect on the differences between Catholic and Lutheran approaches to the Eucharist and, though these questions already appear in *The Spirit of Christianity*, they are developed fully only in the later writings. Given that these developments are crucial to understanding the implications of Hegel's interpretation of the mystical aspect of the Last Supper, and given that they result from a series of modifications to and reinterpretations of Luther's reform, a separate section will be dedicated to the matter later on.

Before following Hegel's argument on this subject, it is worth turning briefly to an important element which has been left so far on the side. As we have seen, Hegel uses two distinct examples to develop his definition of a mystical object, on the one hand the bread and wine (which are treated as one) and, on the other, the ring. Indeed, in a passage cited above, Hegel states that the "mystical action" produces a "mystical object" and makes a direct comparison between the mystical pieces of the ring and the substances handled by Christ. He goes on, however, to consider only the internal transformations of the mystical object at the center of the Last Supper, leaving to one side, if not completely abandoning, the initial parallel with the mysticism of the ring. Indeed, if one examines his interpretation of the bread of the Eucharist as "mystical object", of its oscillation between revelation and concealment, of its aporias and its implications with respect to the distinction between Lutheran and Catholic traditions, it becomes apparent that the argument is entirely based on those particular mystical objects that are the bread and the wine, to the exclusion of any other example such as the ring. What remains then of Hegel's initial parallel between the two? First of all, we must ask: to what extent does this parallel hold? Are the bread and the ring truly equivalent in the context of Hegel's reasoning on the mystical object? The mystical gesture endows the ring, like the bread, with a new meaning: the two halves of the divided object represent the bond of friendship between the two friends. This new meaning, as in the ceremony of the Eucharist, must be understood and shared by all the people involved if the action is to unfold. The parallel, however, ends here: so far as the ring as a mystical object, there is no trace of the delicate question about the need for the object to remain and at the same time to disappear which, in the last analysis, defines the mystical object

as an encounter, a transition, or as an object in motion, thereby making it particularly interesting from a philosophical point of view. If we consider as *mystical* an object that is not merely *symbolical* – as the ring, as a symbol of friendship, would seem to be – but also the fulcrum of a process of revelation, a point of tension where the object is forced beyond its own limits, then Hegel's argument in fact exposes the differences rather than the similarities between both objects. Just as Hegel draws the ring and the bread together in the definition of the mystical object, an important new problem arises as to the role of the mystical object and its specificity.⁶³

As I have already noted, Hegel only indirectly distinguishes mystical action from symbolic action, and never furnishes the reader with a structured explanation of this difference. In addition, the role and meaning of the mystical object fluctuate over the course of his analysis in *The Spirit of Christianity* and Hegel sometimes even equates the more philosophically interesting meaning of the concept with the more *reductive* one, so to speak. But the ring can only be defined as mystical if the complexities of the transformations that the bread and the wine undergo are set to one side: it can only be defined as mystical if by mystical we mean *any object* to which a symbolic and private meaning is attributed. From this perspective, Hegel's definition of the term *mystical* suddenly seems capable of embracing an infinite quantity of phenomena, and both terms – mystical and symbolical – no longer seem distinguishable. The *mystical* is rendered so generic by this conflation, that it appears to lose all specificity and, as a result, all philosophical interest.

But it is precisely this generalization that allows Hegel to hazard a parallel between the bread and the ring, and define them both as mystical objects. The role of the ring remains *static*: the ring is not endowed with the same meanings and contradictions as the bread and this, as we will see, will have important repercussions on the later development of Hegel's thought. The parallel is problematic from a theoretical point of view and, rather than acting as another example coming to illustrate and clarify the notion of mystical object, the ring seems instead to complicate it, disturbing Hegel's subtle reflection on the mystical meaning of the Last Supper with a more superficial and approximative interpretation.

As we have seen, Hegel's use of terminology in *The Spirit of Christianity* is far from rigorous, and one often feels that he is in fact experimenting as much with language as he is with concepts. The adjective *mystical* does take on a more specific

⁶³ For a more detailed discussion of this problem see Muratori (2013). It is worth noting that for Dellbrügger (1998) the example of the ring is, on the contrary, perfectly coherent with the concept of mystical object as it is handled by Christ. Just as the bread oscillates between presence and absence over the course of the ritual, so the ring dissolves when it is broken in the name of friendship, only to be reconstituted when the friends meet again. In this sense the bond of friendship expressed in the ring is no different to the bond of love represented in the scene of the Last Supper (see for example 58 and above all 158–159). As a result of this approach, however, Dellbrügger is not in a position to draw a distinction between the *mystical* and the *symbolical*, nor can he convincingly analyse the specificity of the mystical gesture. In my view it is in fact very important that likeness between the two actions (splitting the bread and splitting the ring) be recognized as only partial, even in light of the gesture accomplished by Christ during the Last Supper in a ritual, true and proper; hence the importance of Hegel's reflection on the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism, which Dellbrügger does not satisfactorily address (see *ibid.*, 37 et seq.).

meaning in Hegel's analysis of the Last Supper, however, and through his discussion of the characteristics and effects of Christ's mystical action Hegel gradually begins to define the field of action and the particularity of the mystical object itself. At the same time, Hegel's reflection also encounters moments of difficulty, in which the term *mystical* is used imprecisely and generically, as in the example of the ring. It comes as no surprise that the mystical object, understood as the fragile meeting point between human and divine, but also as an object of great mobility and vitality, the incarnation of movement itself, is echoed and developed in Hegel's later conception of mysticism, elaborated in the crucial years around the time he was writing *Phenomenology*. Journeying toward a redefinition of the role of mysticism, Hegel gradually frees himself from the rather vague notion of the *mystical* as applicable to all things endowed with a special meaning and begins to use the term *mystisch* in an increasingly selective and precise manner.

One of the ways in which Hegel develops his analysis of the function of the mystical object, begun in *The Spirit of Christianity*, is through the discussion of Luther's role in the reform of the Eucharistic rite. Hegel returns to this theme, a theme which echoes a number of issues already present in the Frankfurt text, in several writings of his maturity. We will now address the implications of these analyses for an understanding of his interpretation of the mystical essence of the Last Supper and the different ways through which this essence is conserved in Catholic and Protestant ecclesiastic rituals. As we will see, the complexity of the problem of the mystical object is by no means exhausted by Hegel's analysis in *The Spirit of Christianity*.

Having closed these parentheses – which are, as I have already noted, crucial for understanding the specifically *mystical* nature of the Eucharist – we will return to *The Spirit of Christianity* in order to investigate one last theme: the relationship between enthusiasm and mysticism. This relationship is absolutely central to Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism and for this reason it will be the main focus of the sections to come.

1.2.3 Luther and the “Mystical Point” of the Ritual

In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, and more precisely in the section dedicated to Scholastic philosophy, the question of the real presence of God in the host – a question of fundamental importance to medieval philosophy – is once again discussed. Here too, Hegel considers the ambiguity of the bread of the Eucharist that, to a certain extent, hosts the Divine – and we will see to what extent – without, however, giving up its own completely worldly nature as an edible object. While in *The Spirit of Christianity* Hegel had explored the mystical character of Christ's Last Supper, paying particular attention to the objects handled by him, in the passages I will now examine, the problem is partially transposed: Hegel's analysis focuses not on the mysticism of the Last Supper but on the mysticism of the ecclesiastical ritual repeated in memory of Christ. The discussion focuses on the question of the meaning of the host which, like the bread of the Last Supper, represents the Divine as object – that is to say having been transformed into a thing toward which the faithful

turn with adoration. At first sight, it would seem that the argument does not change: the host is considered in a manner analogous to the mystical objects described by Hegel in *The Spirit of Christianity*, namely as a point of transition between the objectivation of God and the dissolution of this same objectivation through the consumption of the bread by believers. In these lectures however, Hegel extends the discussion by introducing an extremely important new element: the difference between the Catholic and Lutheran interpretations of the meaning of the host. This difference is crucial for understanding what, according to Hegel, is the mystical significance of the ritual of the Last Supper, how it is transposed into the Catholic rite and then modified into the Lutheran rite. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicated to the relationship between Scholastic philosophy and Christianity we read:

That which mediates in the rite is present, it is accomplished, accomplished in the individual in the highest point, which is called mass; there is the relation to that which mediates as to something objective, it should be consumed by the individual so that he partakes of it. And this objective is that which is still present as host and as consumption of it during mass. This host is regarded on the one hand as host, as something objective, for the Divine; on the other it is a non-spiritual, external thing according to its form. But this is the profoundest point of the *exteriority* of the Church; indeed the knee must be bent before the thing in this perfect exteriority, not insofar as it is an object of consumption. Luther changed this approach; he preserved the mystical point in what is called the Last Supper, that is, that the subject receives in itself the Divine – but that it is divine only insofar as it is consumed in faith, insofar as in faith and consumption it stops being an external thing. This faith and consumption is first the subjective spirituality; and insofar as it is in this it is spiritual, not while it remains an external thing.⁶⁴

At the moment of the consecration, the Catholic ritual reaches the highest point. The host here, in keeping with the description of the mystical object provided in *The Spirit of Christianity*, is described as a bivalent object, since on the one hand it is the Divine itself become object, while on the other it remains a pure and simple thing, dead, with no spirit, external. In contrast to the Frankfurt text, however, the terminology used here to describe the moment of God's objectivation in the bread is far more complex: the adjectival pairing of subject and object is accompanied by a second pairing, the internal and the external. There are very clear reasons for this choice, since the heart of the discussion concerns the passage from the Catholic rite

⁶⁴ *Werke* 15, 145–146 (cf. TWA 19, 537–538): “Das Vermittelnde im Kultus ist vorhanden, es wird vollbracht, am Individuum vollbracht in dem höchsten Punkt, der die Messe heißt; da ist das Verhältnis zum Vermittelnden als zum Objektiven, dieß soll genossen werden von dem Individuum, daß es dessen theilhaftig wird. Und dieß Objektive ist es, was als Hostie und als Genuß derselben in der Messe immer noch vorhanden ist. Diese Hostie gilt einer Seits, als Hostie, als gegenständlich, für das Göttliche; anderer Seits ist sie der Gestalt nach ein ungeistiges, äußerliches Ding. Das ist aber der tiefste Punkt der *Außerlichkeit* in der Kirche; denn vor dem Dinge in dieser vollkommenen Außerlichkeit muß das Knie gebeugt werden, nicht sofern es Gegenstand des Genusses ist. Luther hat diese Weise verändert; er hat den mystischen Punkt beibehalten in dem, was das Abendmahl genannt wird, daß das Subjekt in sich empfängt das Göttliche, – aber daß es nur insofern göttlich ist, als es genossen wird im Glauben, insofern es im Glauben und im Genuß aufhört, ein äußerliches Ding zu seyn. Dieser Glauben und Genuß ist erst die subjektive Geistigkeit; und sofern es in dieser ist, ist es geistig, nicht indeß es ein äußerliches Ding bleibt.”

to the Reformed rite, the central characteristic of the latter being, according to Hegel, the return to the interiority of religious consciousness in an attempt to counter the excessive exteriority of the Catholic rite. Hegel conducts his reasoning on two levels therefore, that of the movement of the mystical object between objectivity and subjectivity and, at the same time, that of the contrast between the exteriority represented by Catholicism and the interiority proposed by Luther.

Let us begin with the *exteriority* (*Äußerlichkeit*) that guides Hegel's analysis in this passage. In the Catholic rite, the exteriority of the thing is not understood simply as a negative limit, as that which resists the transformation of the object into something Divine: the irreducible exteriority of the host represents *the most profound point*, indeed the most crucial moment of the ritual, since the communicant is required to kneel before this object. In this sense, Catholicism underlines the importance of the moment in which the Eucharistic bread is adored – this adoration relies upon the cult of the thing in its “perfect exteriority”. It is not, however, the bond of love and friendship created by the sharing of the bread that is emphasized here (as was the case in the context of the Last Supper discussed in *The Spirit of Christianity*) but the role of the host as an object of veneration. The Lutheran reform came to challenge this Roman tendency toward the adoration of the Eucharistic bread in its external form, claiming that it risked conflating God with the materiality of the object, thereby rendering the two as one and the same. Luther thus modified and sought to limit the extreme importance attributed by the Roman Church to the exteriority of the host as object, by restricting the veneration of the divine presence in the bread and the excesses that could ensue. The consumption of the consecrated host is not interpreted by Luther in a literal sense, as the act through which God may be eaten in the form of food, but rather as a spiritual consumption that may only take place through faith. It is indeed faith that unites God and the believer in the Lutheran rite, and not the host as such, and the Divine manifests itself in the interiority of the individual, not in the exteriority of the object.

For Hegel, the Lutheran reform brings about a spiritualization of the ritual, shifting the emphasis from the revelation of God in the bread to the revelation of God in the spirit of each individual believer. Every trace of exteriority is eliminated from the relationship between God and the faithful, including the adoration of the host in the form of an object; in this way each individual can relate to God without any need for intermediaries, as Hegel confirms with clarity in the section of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicated to Luther: “Any exteriority is abolished in relation to me, even the exteriority of the host: I stand in relation to God only in the consumption and in faith.”⁶⁵

In spite of Luther's radical intervention on the meaning of the rite and in particular on the meaning of the Eucharistic bread, Hegel maintains that the mystical point of the celebration is kept intact even in the protestant context. What Hegel refers to as the “mystical point” seems to be the idea of the actual presence of the Divine, whether incarnated in the host as in the case of Catholicism, or revealed in the inte-

⁶⁵ *Werke* 15, 257 (cf. TWA 20, 52): “Alle Aeüßerlichkeit in Beziehung auf mich ist verbannt, ebenso die Aeüßerlichkeit der Hostie: nur im Genuß und Glauben stehe ich in Beziehung zu Gott”.

riority of the believer as in reformed Christianity. Although the Eucharistic bread is a mere object for Luther and not the locus of a Divine incarnation, the fact remains that a union with God is also thought to be possible in reformed Christianity, albeit in a different way. This union forms the mystical heart of the ritual. In Hegel's commentary on the meaning of the Last Supper in *The Spirit of Christianity*, union already had a pivotal role to play (indeed as the union between Christ and his disciples); the same problem of fusion with the Divine is carried through into the ecclesiastical ritual, and becomes the crucial point at which the Roman church and the reformed church converge and diverge at the same time. This sense of union with God constitutes the mystical kernel of the rite. It is already present in the gesture performed by Christ and is maintained and kept intact even in Luther's version of the rite.

Undoubtedly, however, the "mystical object", as it is described by Hegel in the Frankfurt text, is subjected to a remarkable torsion within the Lutheran interpretation presented in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: this torsion is, more specifically, a torsion inwards, a process of "interiorization" through which the exteriority of the object loses importance and its spiritual content comes to the fore. The bread, in its corporal nature or in its *appearance* (another possible translation of the term *Äußerlichkeit*) is not the end point of the ritual – as it is in the Catholic rite, where the bread is entirely transformed into the flesh of Christ – but only its starting point: it is used instrumentally to symbolize the union with God, a union which can only take place, however, at the level of the individual conscience.⁶⁶ The materiality of the object is consumed and the presence of God comes to be perceived as internal to the subject, as internal to his spirit. For Hegel then, Lutheranism represents a retreat into interiority, shifting the balance sharply in favor of subjective experience and of the role of conscience in the individual's relation to the Divine, in reaction to the excessive exteriorization of Catholicism.⁶⁷ To the exteriority of the object that was considered so essential to the mystical movement of the ritual in *The Spirit of Christianity*, Luther opposes the inner meaning of which the object is just the bearer. The *Äußerlichkeit* around which the Roman Church constructs its Eucharistic rite is,

⁶⁶See *Werke* 12, 339–340 (cf. TWA 17, 328–329): "Die lutherische Vorstellung ist, daß die Bewegung anfängt von einem Aeufferlichen, das ein gewöhnliches, gemeines Ding ist, daß aber der Genuß, das Selbstgefühl der Gegenwärtigkeit Gottes zu Stande kommt, insoweit und insofern die Aeufferlichkeit verzehrt wird, nicht bloß leiblich, sondern im Geist und Glauben. Im Geist und Glauben nur ist der gegenwärtige Gott. Die sinnliche Gegenwart ist für sich nichts, und auch die Consecration macht die Hostie nicht zu einem Gegenstand der Verehrung, sondern der Gegenstand ist allein im Glauben, und so im Verzehren und Vernichten des Sinnlichen die Vereinigung mit Gott und das Bewußtseyn dieser Vereinigung des Subjects mit Gott. Hier ist das große Bewußtseyn aufgegangen, daß außer dem Genuß und Glauben die Hostie ein gemeines, sinnliches Ding ist: der Vorgang ist allein im Geiste des Subjects wahrhaft. Da ist keine Transsubstantiation – allerdings eine Transsubstantiation, aber eine solche, wodurch das Aeufferliche aufgehoben wird, die Gegenwart Gottes schlechthin eine geistige ist, so, daß der Glaube des Subjects dazu gehört."

⁶⁷We will see later that this movement of introversion, upon which the protestant Reform is founded, constitutes for Hegel an essential trait and characteristic of German philosophy. Indeed, Hegel returns to this point in the section of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicated to Böhme: see below (Chap. 3, Sect. 3.1.2).

for this very reason, also interpreted by Protestantism as a non-essential and almost alienating appearance that must be dispelled in order to draw attention to the true, purely spiritual, meaning of the ritual. In this sense, the importance attributed to the materiality of the object is, for Luther, just the shell that masks the actual spiritual content of the ritual performed in Christ's memory, and religion must be founded on this inner kernel and on nothing else.⁶⁸

On several occasions Hegel expresses his appreciation of the reformist intent and of attempts to consider the central role both of the subject and of the individual conscience, praising Luther for having opened the way to the freedom of the spirit and for having laid the foundations for the development of philosophy in the German language. At the same time, however, Hegel detects a possible problem in this radical move toward the interiority of religious and, above all, *mystical* experience (union with God takes place as a private event which depends on the faith of the individual). Indeed, we have seen that the passage of the Divine *through the corporeity* of the bread and the wine constitutes the mystical aspect of the Last Supper in *The Spirit of Christianity*, but if the role of the object becomes purely symbolic and if religious experience is relegated to the interiority of conscience, can we still speak of the *mysticism* of the ritual? Hegel proposes an answer to this question in the notes compiled for his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (in an autograph manuscript of 1821), in which we read:

host only *in believing* and in *tasting* itself [...]. Every head of a household, just like every teacher, baptizer, confessor, and host presented as a thing is a dough, *not* God. Reformed representation without this *mystical – memory* a purely psychological relation; everything speculative vanished, sublated in the relation of the community. The reformed church therefore, the point where the divine, the truth, decays to the prose of the Enlightenment and the mere intellect, in the process of subjective determination.⁶⁹

The opening considerations add nothing new to the points already made in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: according to Protestant doctrine the consecration of the host is an event that takes place entirely within the spirituality of the faithful in such a way that the host itself may be tasted only in the interiority and in the faith of the believer. Naturally, this shift of attention toward the intimate and subjective meaning of the rite brings with it as a logical necessity the fact that every individual can relate to the Eucharistic ritual without any need for intermediaries, hence the theory of universal priesthood. Thus, the host that is handled during the

⁶⁸ See *Werke* 15, 254 (cf. TWA 20, 50): “Erst mit Luther begann die Freiheit des Geistes, im Kerne: und hatte diese Form, sich im Kerne zu halten.” Speight has suggested that a link exists between Luther's role as a promoter of freedom of conscience and the figure of Socrates (see Speight (2006), 21).

⁶⁹ V 5, 91: “Hostie nur *im Glauben* und *Genuß* selbst [...]. Jeder Hausvater ebenso Lehrer, Täufer, Beichtiger, und Hostie hinübergestellt als Ding ist ein Brotteig, *nicht* der Gott. Reformierte *Vorstellung* ohne dies *Mystische – Andenken*, gemein psychologisches Verhältnis; alles Spekulative verschwunden, in dem Verhältnis der Gemeinde aufgehoben. Die reformierte Kirche daher der Punkt, wo das Göttliche, die Wahrheit, in die Prosa der Aufklärung und des bloßen Verstandes herunterfällt, in den Verlauf der subjektiven Besonderheit.”

ritual remains a mixture of water and flour; it is not transformed into God. At this point the argument takes a rather unexpected turn, and Hegel goes on to affirm that in the absence of this mystical aspect the Protestant representation (*Vorstellung*) becomes a mere psychological condition. The mystical aspect of the ritual, as we have already seen, consists in the conviction that the faithful can experience a union with God who has become a real presence within the host for the Catholic tradition or, for the Protestant tradition, within the spirit of the faithful. The role of the host as mystical object is curbed drastically by Luther, and the weight of the ritual action is transferred onto the subject who receives the Divine within himself without the need for an intermediary, be it in the form of the Eucharistic bread or in the form of the priest charged with the distribution of the bread. The movement that Hegel had initially detected as internal to the mystical object undergoes a transformation – the phase of objectivation loses importance in favor of a turn toward subjectivity – but it does not come to a halt: the mystical point is preserved because the union with the Divine remains a possible event, albeit fully internal to the conscience of the individual.

If the emphasis on subjective movement is taken to such an extreme – adds Hegel in the second part of the passage cited above – that the subject becomes a *Besonderheit* (the root of which is the verb *sondern*, to separate), that is to say an independent entity, internally bounded and no longer in any contact with the outside, with no relation to an objective *exteriority* (just as the presence of the divine within the mystical object was objective), then the mysticism of the ritual is also lost, and one falls into a purely psychological approach. For Hegel this imbalance is typical of Enlightenment thought, which interprets religious phenomena in purely intellectual terms. Returning to the key element of the present investigation, namely the mysticism of the ritual, the issue may be formulated as follows: from the perspective of Enlightenment thought, the moment in which God manifests himself in the ritual retains no trace of objectivity and as a result it is reduced to a phenomenon pertaining merely to psychology, or (one could say) to the imagination of the individual. With this loss of objectivity, the very mysticism of ritual practice vanishes.

One final issue remains to be clarified. Hegel writes that the reformed Church constitutes “the point where the divine, the truth, decays to the prose of the Enlightenment”, and this *point* is to be interpreted as a turning point, or a point of transition. Reformed religion has not deteriorated in such a way that the mystical meaning of the ritual would be lost, but the clear predominance of the role of the subject lends itself to excessive and hyper-subjectivist interpretations such as that of the Enlightenment. In this sense the Reform can be said to have constituted the beginning of a process in which the balance began to change, the crucial point of an evolution from which the Enlightenment itself drew inspiration. Without entering into a discussion of Hegel’s criticism of the Protestant Reformation, a theme which deserves to be treated separately and in its own right, we may note that the complexity of Hegel’s approach does not limit itself to a mere appraisal of the objectives of the reformers but tries to understand the successes and failures of the Reformation

from the perspective of their evolution and of their historic context.⁷⁰ The subjectivist, inward turn of the Lutheran reform will occupy us again below, where the role it played in the development of philosophical thought in the German language will be considered.⁷¹

A final detail of particular interest, which will be developed further and explained in the following sections, is the connection between *mysticism* and *speculation*. In the passage quoted above, from the 1821 manuscript, Hegel maintains that, in the absence of a mystical substrate, the theoretical structure of the Reformation ends up falling into Enlightenment *prose*⁷² devoid of any *speculative* relevance (“alles Spekulative verschwunden”, all speculation vanished). When the mystical character of the religious ritual is lost – and the mystical character of the ritual, as we have seen, is in essence a matter of movement, of transition – so too is the speculative interest of the religious phenomenon. The perfect parallel between these two losses suggests the existence of a link between mysticism and speculation and, as we will see later on, this link is particularly close and important to the present study. We can already note that, following Hegel's reasoning, the perception of God's real presence constitutes both the mystical and the speculative moment of the ritual: if the mystical character of the ritual is removed, then its speculative depth is also modified, transformed into the superficiality of merely psychological analysis.

Mysticism (*Mystik*), speculation and church ritual are thus the three pivots on which Hegel's argument turns with respect to the difference between Catholic and Lutheran approaches and to the precarious equilibrium of the mystical content of the reformed ritual which is central to the passage cited above. Before concluding this brief *excursus*, a few comments on the articulation of these three elements are in order. In my view, the relationship between them, as investigated in the Hegelian manuscript of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, is of great importance; this later material can in fact be used to shed light on the complexity and aporias of

⁷⁰I disagree with Kroner when he writes: “Obviously, Hegel was fighting especially against the Roman Catholic Church and took his examples from its history. The Protestant church is viewed as a fresh attempt at a purely moral religion, purged of all positive elements” (ETW, 7). There can be no ambiguity as to Hegel's appreciation of the salutariness of the Lutheran reform; but Hegel's approach remains far more critical and circumspect than Kroner leads us to believe (see, for example, his already very sharp criticism of Luther in the Bern fragments: “Wie weit z. B. Luther von der Idee der Verehrung Gottes in Geist und Wahrheit entfernt war, zeigen seine traurigen Streitigkeiten mit Zwingli, Ökolampad usw., er benahm den Geistlichen die Macht, durch Gewalt und über die Beutel zu herrschen, aber er wollte es noch über die Meinungen” (TWA 1, 63)). I have already highlighted several key aspects of Hegel's critique of Catholicism, but one should not infer, as Kroner does, that Hegel's attitude toward the Church of Rome was utterly hostile. On the contrary, Hegel seems to be interested in the essentially *speculative* character and content of the Catholic doctrine.

⁷¹Hegel is especially interested in Luther's German translation of the Bible, for the latter's attempt to develop a technical vocabulary in German with which to understand and speak of the religious phenomenon: see below (Chap. 3, Sect. 3.1.2).

⁷²On the Hegelian opposition between the Protestant taste for *prose* (which led to the type of Enlightenment prose referred to in the passage quoted above) and the *poetic* spirit of Catholicism see di Giovanni and Harris (2000), 381.

the conception of “mystical object” developed in *The Spirit of Christianity*. In this way we can clarify and unravel a number of problematic issues identified in the preceding paragraphs. In the long Frankfurt text, the question – which, as we have seen, remains partly unresolved – was also chiefly that of understanding the mystical character of the ritual of the Last Supper: the text focused on the meaning and effect of Christ’s action, an action exercised on two objects in particular, the bread and the wine. In this sense, mysticism and ritual action are closely interwoven, without, however, becoming equivalent or interchangeable. In the manuscript of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1821), Hegel adds a third term, namely *speculation*, which comes into play at the point in which he seeks to explain the course described by the Lutheran reform, from its move toward the interiority of religious experience as far as the total loss of objectivity of the Enlightenment interpretation. The articulation of these three terms – mysticism, ritual, speculation – is further defined in another passage of the 1821 manuscript. In the third part of the manuscript, Hegel’s reasoning focuses on the role of each individual within the religious community, and on the internalization of the experience of a relationship to the Divine. This, to use the vocabulary of the manuscript, consists in an antinomy between the freedom of the individual and the becoming objective of God. This antinomic relationship, writes Hegel, takes on three different forms which are structured along a path of ascent. The first level is represented by the moral presentation or approach (*Darstellung*), the second by the religious/devotional approach, and the third is defined as “mystisch und kirchlich”, mystical and ecclesiastical.⁷³ Not only is the mystical moment situated at the apex of this ascent, the mystical attitude is also clearly distinguished from the religious one, so that they cannot be equated. The coupling of the terms *mystisch* and *kirchlich* may seem surprising: indeed, the Church represents the exteriority of religion,⁷⁴ while in this passage it is clearly stated that the mystico-ecclesiastical approach defines the relationship of the individual with God, a private and therefore subjective relationship, which can be expressed only in the intimacy of conscience. It is, however, possible to look at the problem from another angle. The mystical stage can be regarded as the moment in which the exteriority of the Church comes to be reflected in the interiority of conscience, and in the process the sacredness of the ecclesiastical world is transferred into the internal relationship between God and the believer. The mystical perspective reveals conscience as the locus of the encounter between God and the believer, causing a retreat inwards reminiscent of the Hegelian interpretation of the Reform as a turn toward subjectivity.

On the mystical level, the relationship between God and subjective will or being becomes closer, and conscience becomes the terrain on which this drawing-near may take place: “the mystical and ecclesiastical presentation [...] brings it [this relationship] in the determined form that we have seen, to consciousness – the

⁷³ V 5, 91: “Es sind drei Vorstellungsweisen in Rücksicht auf den Weg der Seele zu bemerken, deren Unterschied zur Erläuterung dient: a) die moralische Darstellung b) die fromme überhaupt, religiöse g) die mystische und kirchliche.”

⁷⁴ See GW 17, 330–331.

speculative side of the nature of the idea.”⁷⁵ Once again the parallel between mysticism and speculation is apparent: in this case, however, we are not dealing with a parallel disappearance, as in the case we considered earlier, but rather with a simultaneous appearance: the mystical level opens the way to speculative understanding. In the *Blätter für Religionsphilosophie* (*Papers for the Philosophy of Religion*), which probably date back to the Berlin period, the emergence of speculation at the mystical level is outlined even more clearly, given that the text highlights the fact that the previous step (namely the devotional approach) represents “the universal, non-speculative relation to God.”⁷⁶ The strictly speculative relation with respect to the Divine is reached only at the top of this path, in the mystical moment. Of course, it will be necessary to identify more precisely the characteristics of this speculative approach to the Divine, given that Hegel uses the term *speculation* in a technical sense and that the mystico-speculative bond reoccurs in other important passages which we will examine later on.⁷⁷

To understand the meaning of the persistence of the mystical content in the context of Protestantism, and thus the limits of the relationship between mysticism and ritual (the very terms which provide the initial impetus for this analysis), it is enough at present to point out the following aspects. First of all, the mystical moment, while closely bound to church ritual, represents a level that is higher than simple devotional religiosity. Indeed, it is the mystical approach that opens the way to speculative profundity – that is to say, as we will see, to a true and proper *understanding* of the mysteries rather than to their mere *representation* in religious terms. Reaching the mystical level, moreover, coincides with a flexion toward the interiority of conscience that seems in turn to correspond to Hegel's understanding of the reformist intent, namely a return to the essence or to the kernel (*Kern*) of religious life.⁷⁸

⁷⁵V 5, 92: “Die mystische und kirchliche [Darstellung] bestimmt diesen Zusammenhang Gottes und des subjektiven Wollens und Seins näher und bringt ihn in der bestimmten Form, die wir gesehen, zum Bewußtsein – das Spekulative der Natur der Idee.”

⁷⁶GW 17, 332: “Fromm, allgemeine nicht speculative Beziehung auf Gott.” In this case, however, Hegel does not use the term *religiös*, as he does in the 1821 manuscript. Instead, he uses the term *fromm*.

⁷⁷The differences between the Hegelian manuscript and the version of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* provided in Michelet's edition are of particular importance here, given that the same passage in the latter comes with a crucial modification: “die mystische und kirchliche Ansicht bestimmt diesen Zusammenhang Gottes und des subjectiven Wollens und Seyns näher und bringt ihn in das Verhältniß, dem die Natur der Idee zu Grunde liegt” (*Werke* 12, 338; cf. TWA 17, 327). In Hegel's first notes we read: “das Spekulative der Natur der Idee.” The reference to speculation disappears in the TWA, giving way to a more generic expression: “Natur der Idee”. The fact that Hegel uses the term *speculation*, reached through a reflection on the character of the mystical approach, is extremely important in my view. Without this reference the passage loses much of its force and ultimately also much of its meaning.

⁷⁸Indeed, the passage most recently quoted continues with reference to reformed Christianity, which represents, writes Hegel, the religious approach which is the most rich in spirit even if it cannot be defined as speculative (V 5, 93: “die lutherische Fassung ist ohne Zweifel die *geistreichste*, jedoch nicht spekulative”). In Michelet's version (*Werke* 12, 338; cf. TWA 17, 327) the term

Conscience, which for Luther represented the starting point for a religious re-founding, is also the terrain on which the mystical encounter takes place. In the manuscript from 1821, mysticism and rituality are similarly interwoven, and the importance of the role of subjectivity is also underlined – the latter having been sketched out in *The Spirit of Christianity*. But the outlined progression, which suggests that in the mystical moment the highest point of the relation between the individual and the divine mysteries is achieved, allows for a rethinking both of the first aspect (are mysticism and ritual inseparably linked?) and of the second (in what way does the individual become engaged in this mystical relationship?).

In another note that Hegel intended for the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* we read: “Mystical function – universal intuition of the inward, – and movement of the inward”.⁷⁹ These are the opening lines of the text, which for this reason bears the title *Mystischer Dienst*, mystical function. Of particular interest here is the manner in which ritual is defined in the two formulations that immediately follow the *incipit*, even if these are merely passing notes apparently intended only to set on paper the course of a line of reasoning. To begin with the “mystical function” (“mystischer Dienst”, where *Dienst* has the meaning of *office, function, service*) is a “universal intuition of the inward”: indeed the action that defines the mystical rite, intuition, involves the act of looking inward (again there is a return to the sense of the mystical act folding in upon itself, of a deviation inwards), that can be understood just as much in an objective sense – it is the inward that is observed – as in a subjective sense – interiority, or conscience, is the subject that carries out the action of discovery, of investigation. The second part of the definition is even more important, since it completes the action contained in the first part: the rite is, or provokes, a “movement of the inward”. Thus, a connection is established between mystical rituality, interiority – that seems to become the specific locus on which the mystical action acts – and movement, to the point that one might consider mysticism (at least provisionally) to be a movement of interiority activated by the ritual gesture. This idea of mobility, which was already present in the perennial passing from object to subject, from interiority to exteriority that Hegel had observed in the mystical object he described in *The Spirit of Christianity*, is in fact the focal point of the entire argument. The movement triggered by the mystical character of the ritual brings vitality

spekulativ has disappeared: “Die lutherische Fassung ist ohne Zweifel die geistreichste, wenn sie auch noch nicht vollständig die Form der Idee erreicht hat.” In this case, too, particular attention must be paid to the use of the term *spekulativ* in the Hegelian manuscript. The assertion according to which the Lutheran Reform, although full of merits from Hegel’s point of view, fails to reach the level of speculation, is an assertion which must be taken seriously. Indeed, it will soon become clear that the speculative (and mystical) approach cannot be assimilated to a mere religious *Vorstellung*: the speculative far surpasses the religious, and its terrain is truly philosophical. This is why the Lutheran Reform, in spite of having opened the way to speculation, never itself had a speculative character.

⁷⁹GW 17, 313: “Mystischer Dienst – Allgemeines Anschauen des Innren, – und Bewegung des Innern”.

to this internal locus which is not only observed and explored through the dynamics of the mystical ritual, but also *stirred*, so to speak, to the point of becoming alive, active and mobile. This is a crucial point: the mystical character of the ritual coincides with a dynamic capacity.

It is here that the Lutheran problem of religion's return to interiority discovers a different way of understanding mysticism, no longer simply as the union between the human and the divine (the *mystical point* of the ritual) but also as a path which generates knowledge (looking inwards) and, above all, which brings relationships to life and produces movement. As we have already seen in the context of the mystical object, the dynamics of revelation and concealment were not foreign to mysticism. Now, however, there emerges another element: the mystical function is referred to as an action that itself produces movement, a particular sort of movement geared toward the inside and capable above all of bringing into focus or throwing light on the very interiority upon which it acts.

The notes written for the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* show a possible path through which the themes of *The Spirit of Christianity* are taken up and further developed in the mature writings, but they can also be used to shed light on the different courses (often consisting of attempts, hypotheses and abandoned ideas) of Hegel's line of reasoning in the early writings. As we have seen, the approach to the role of mysticism in these early texts has two fronts to it: on the one hand, in the Bern writings, mysticism is analysed as a form of alienation; on the other, however, we find the study – only an outline, and yet crucial if considered in the context of its subsequent evolution – of mystical ritual as a moment of revelation, as a retreat into interiority (above all in the Lutheran version), but also as a complex encounter whose particular and intrinsic movement is capable of generating knowledge. The exploration of this second way of understanding the concept and function of mysticism begins at first in the most important text of the Frankfurt period – a text in which Hegel does not, however, set about building a systematic and structured argument but in which a series of interpretive perspectives are opened up, which evolve only later in his mature writings. In this sense, a glimpse at the notes on the philosophy of religion provides a possible link between the section of *The Spirit of Christianity* that we have already examined and the last section of the text, in which Hegel introduces an element fundamental to our inquiry, namely excessive enthusiasm, *Schwärmerei*. Indeed, mysticism in the sense that we have just examined, that is to say as a movement and introspective action, is closely bound with what Hegel, in the Frankfurt text, calls *Schwärmerei*, the excessive enthusiasm characteristic of Christ's manner of behaving. The meaning attributed in this text to Christ's *Schwärmerei* is fundamental if we are to grasp the evolution of Hegel's conception of enthusiasm in the later writings (and its link with a certain type of mysticism will become essential to the discussion of the role of Jakob Böhme in the *History of Philosophy*). Let us then return from the question of the difference between Lutheranism and Catholicism to the text with which we began. The relation between mysticism, ritual and speculation, which I have only briefly mentioned in this *excursus*, will become much clearer in the context of its interaction with the enthusiasm of Christ the *Schwärmer*.

1.3 *Speaking Mystically: Mysticism, Movement and Schwärmerei in The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate*

I have already mentioned the question of love and its aporias in relation to the act of consecration, that is to say the mystical action through which the mystical object is transformed – though impermanently – into the very love of Christ incorporated and made tangible. Hegel returns to the role of love in the concluding pages of *The Spirit of Christianity*, where he discusses the content of Christ's doctrine, the complex relationship it entertains with its Judaic roots and, last but not least, the fate of Christ the man and above all of his teachings. Indeed, the latter can be summarized as follows: "I give you a new commandment, says Jesus, that you love each other, from this it should be recognizable that you are my disciples".⁸⁰ Love, then, is both the essence that grounds the religious teachings of Christ and the bond that unites the master and his disciples, and for this reason, *Liebe* and *Vereinigung* (love and unification) can, as we have already seen, be considered as intimately related: love acts as a unifying force capable of giving rise to remarkable intensity (indeed, it is the force of *Liebe* that binds the bread of the Eucharist to a whole new meaning).

In the final part of the text, the function of love is reinterpreted in a broader context and becomes the primary characteristic of that which Christ calls the "Kingdom of God" in opposition to earthly kingdoms and to the Judaic world in particular, which is marked by deep rifts and scissions and does not partake in the union brought about by divine love.

In God's kingdom the common element is that all are alive in God, and this common trait [is] not [given] in a concept, but [is] love, a vital bond that unites the faithful, this perception of the unity of life, in which all oppositions, which as such are enmities, and also the unifications of the existing oppositions – rights, are sublated.⁸¹

The vital bond of love acts in a twofold manner. Firstly – as the expression "vital bond" suggests – it has a vitalizing effect: not only are the believers joined to God through this love, they also become participants in a vital and active union with the divine. This union is *lived*; it is a matter of experience not of conceptual understanding. The unity of life can be perceived by means of this love (a perception that is simultaneously an act of fusion with life itself) but remains outside the detached point of view of conceptuality. Secondly, in love, *all* oppositions, conflicts and

⁸⁰ N, 321: "ein neu Gebot gebe ich euch, sagt Jesus, daß ihr euch untereinander liebt, daran soll man erkennen, daß ihr meine Jünger seid."

⁸¹ Ibid.: "Im Reiche Gottes ist das Gemeinschaftliche, daß alle in Gott lebendig sind, nicht das Gemeinschaftliche in einem Begriff, sondern Liebe, ein lebendiges Band, das die Glaubenden vereinigt, diese Empfindung der Einigkeit des Lebens, in der alle Entgegensetzungen, als solche Feindschaften, und auch die Vereinigungen der bestehenden Entgegensetzungen – Rechte aufgehoben sind".

antagonisms are subdued, removed and overcome (Hegel uses the verb *aufheben*).⁸² The unity created by love presents itself in the form of a perfect totality, deprived of internal rifts and yet full of life. To understand this second point it is necessary, however, to examine the nature of these oppositions and the manner in which divine love carries out its conciliatory action. Hegel addresses this problem in a passage referring to the accusations of the Jews against the new doctrine proposed by Christ:

The Jews accused him [*Jesus*] of blasphemy, that he, born a man, made himself God; how would they have recognized in a man something divine, they, the poor, who carried in themselves only the consciousness of their abjection and their deep servitude, of their opposition to the Divine, the consciousness of an insurmountable abyss between human and divine being?⁸³

From the perspective of Jewish tradition and religion, an abyss exists between God and humanity, an abyss that cannot and should not be bridged in any way; a man who declares himself the Son of God, thus trespassing into the unbridgeable depths of this abyss, must then be accused of blasphemy, if not of outright folly, since he claims to personify an impossible harmony between the human and the divine. The separation of heaven and earth that structures the world of Judaism is without doubt the primary opposition which the teaching of Christian love has to face: Jesus Christ embodies the overcoming of this immense divide for in him the human and the divine meet and combine in one single being. The opposition (*Entgegensetzung* carries the etymological root *gegen*, *against*, and thus refers to a diametrical, insoluble opposition) between man and God is, in other words, overcome in the figure of the Son, and the “servile conscience” emerges transformed from this reconciliation of human nature with divine love.⁸⁴ The implications of this overcoming are clear. The two sides of the divide – the human and the divine – are not abolished, nor are they simply transformed into something else. Instead they are united and conserved in the figure of Christ, in whom an unthinkable contradiction coexists with its own resolution and reconciliation. Christ is the living emblem of his own teachings: the very love that he preaches to his disciples as a unifying force is also at the origin of the encounter between human and divine that takes place within his own body.

The reconciliation announced by the Christian doctrine marks a move away from the religious universe of Judaism and a severing of ties with the Hebrew world: the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world can never converge.⁸⁵ The love

⁸² It is well known that there is no English equivalent for the German verb *aufheben* (and for the noun *Aufhebung*). For a discussion of possible translations see Inwood (1992), 183–185 and Pinkard (1996), 349–350.

⁸³ N, 312: “so klagten ihn [*Jesus*] die Juden der Gotteslästerung an, daß er, der ein Mensch geboren sei, sich zum Gotte mache; wie hätten sie an einem Menschen etwas Göttliches erkennen sollen, sie, die Armen, die in sich nur das Bewußtsein ihrer Erbärmlichkeit und ihrer tiefen Knechtschaft, ihrer Entgegensetzung gegen das Göttliche, das Bewußtsein einer unübersteigbaren Kluft zwischen menschlichem und göttlichem Sein trugen.”

⁸⁴ Massolo (1973), 95 interprets Christ’s hostility to the *lifeless* oppositions of the Judaic world as an affirmation of life.

⁸⁵ See N, 327: “Das Reich Gottes ist nicht von dieser Welt”.

preached by Christ, through which the Son is united to the Father and the disciples to their master, gives rise to the necessity of a confrontation and a separation from the Judaic roots from which Christ himself descends,⁸⁶ for the message of unification which this love expresses stands in opposition to the logic of separation and estrangement characteristic of the “Hebrew” mentality and defined by Hegel as “the Jewish principle”:

However sublimated the Idea of God may be, there remains always the Jewish principle of the opposition of thought to reality, of the rational to the sensuous, the tearing of life, a dead correlation of God and the world, [while it is] a connection that can be taken only as a vital correlation and in which one can only speak mystically about the relations of the parties involved.⁸⁷

The opposition, which is already present in the two previously cited passages, is formulated and developed here through a series of contrasts. Indeed, according to Hegel, these scissions are the fundamental underlying structure of the Jewish *Weltanschauung*. The “Jewish principle” of opposition is expressed through a marked separation of thought from reality, of the rational from the sensuous, and produces a tear in the vital fabric of life: for this reason, the believers can no longer perceive anything but the unbridgeable gap that separates them from the divine and, crucially, their distance from life itself. Just as love, unification and life are coterminous, interrelated concepts, so too are separation (*Trennung*), opposition and death closely interconnected. Indeed, in this last case, the extremes (thought and reality, man and God) present themselves as polar opposites, so far apart that no manner of relation, contact or common activity is possible between them. The absolute and radical separation of opposites is tantamount here to immobility, and to death: “the absolute separation, the murdering”.⁸⁸

Given such circumstances, the conclusion to the passage comes as something of a surprise. Indeed, Hegel seems to state that even where the distance is at its greatest and where the scission between man and God cannot be overcome, there is still a way through which the connection (*Verbindung*) can once again be conceived, that is by *speaking mystically*. The mystical approach reactivates the vitality of these relations and transforms the dichotomous relation between extremes whose inner bond has been broken (for Hegel a dead connection, “toter Zusammenhang”) into a relationship that is once again active, alive (a “lebendiger Zusammenhang”). This mystical rereading restores the lost link between the two poles and effects a trans-

⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, 329: “Die Existenz des Jesus war also Trennung von der Welt, und Flucht von ihr in den Himmel”.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 308: “Die Idee von Gott mag noch so sublimiert werden, so bleibt immer das jüdische Prinzip der Entgegensetzung des Gedankens gegen die Wirklichkeit, des Vernünftigen gegen das Sinnliche, die Zerreiung des Lebens, ein toter Zusammenhang Gottes und der Welt, eine Verbindung, die nur als lebendiger Zusammenhang genommen, und bei welchem von den Verhältnissen der Bezogenen nur mystisch gesprochen werden kann.” The pages immediately prior to this passage are dedicated to the analysis of the opening lines of the Gospel of John (up to verses 14–15). Baum (1976), 93–94, provides a rather different interpretation of this passage focusing on the relationship between life and mystery.

⁸⁸ N, 311: “die absolute Trennung, das Töten”.

formation so radical that it allows both extremes to be reconciled and the abyss (the abovementioned *Kluft*) to be overcome.

It should be noted that the possibility, so to speak, of a mystical intervention on the scissions through which the "Jewish principle" is expressed is presented by Hegel as a solution *in extremis*: when the distance separating the two poles of discourse is basically so great that only a mystical perspective can bring them together again. Hegel does not at this stage specify, however, what the full implications of such a mystical re-thinking might be. As we have seen, this is due primarily to the fact that Hegel's early writings appear to the reader as experimental attempts, structured around tentative formulations, terminological oscillations and often fragmentary or incomplete lines of argument. In the present context, though Hegel advances a complex hypothesis – namely that only a mystical rereading may resolve the fractures internal to the "Jewish" worldview – he proceeds no further in his argumentation. Hegel does not for that matter abandon this line of reasoning, but it unfolds in such an irregular and discontinuous manner throughout the text, that we are obliged to rely on his brief description of the role and characteristics of the mystical approach, provided in the passage cited above, in order to reconstruct its development.

Three points in particular ought to be mentioned. First of all, as we have already seen, Hegel's redefinition of the static oppositions he considers characteristic of Hebrew culture in mystical terms draws the two extremities of each dyad abruptly, indeed almost forcefully, together. The unbridgeable gap between heaven and earth is eliminated in, and by, the body of the Son, in whom God and man meet and merge together. The mysticism of the action lies in the fact that it pushes each pole toward the other, indeed almost into the other, thereby causing them to join together. While I have already drawn attention to the connection between mysticism and dynamism, this particular link between movement and mysticism is more complex than the mystical dynamic discussed above; it acquires more general characteristics and a much broader scope of action. The mystical approach, moreover, not only unites the two extremes, it also – and this is the second important point – puts them back into contact with life, thereby making them part of an active and vital relationship. Indeed, Hegel repeatedly emphasizes the fact that the Father of which Christ speaks to his disciples is himself life, a love that unites and cancels out all contrasts: "God cannot be taught, he cannot be learned, because he is life, and can be grasped only through life".⁸⁹ In another passage Hegel uses the following notable expression: "One can speak of the Divine only in a state of inspiration".⁹⁰ Inspiration (*Begeisterung*), envisioned as *inflammatio* or *impetus divinus*,⁹¹ is traditionally considered one of the primary characteristics of mystical, poetic and prophetic attitudes, often thought to be similar on the basis of their ability to come into contact

⁸⁹Ibid., 318: "Gott kann nicht gelehrt, nicht gelernt werden, denn er ist Leben, und kann nur mit Leben gefaßt werden".

⁹⁰Ibid., 305: "Ueber Göttliches kann darum nur in Begeisterung gesprochen werden".

⁹¹DW, *sub voce*: *Begeisterung*.

with sources of literary or divine inspiration.⁹² In the context of Hegel's argument, *Begeisterung* is perhaps best understood as the attitude through which God is apprehended and perceived as living, revealing a certain parallel between the idea of "speaking mystically" and that of "speaking of God in a state of inspiration". Elsewhere in the same text, a correlation is drawn between *Begeisterung* and fullness of spirit (*das Geistvolle*), neither of which feature for Hegel in the dry words of Mark the Evangelist.⁹³ Enthusiasm therefore not only allows access to life, which can be neither taught nor learnt, but is also necessary to give a soul and a spirit to words that are otherwise arid, in exactly the same way that immobile and lifeless differences can be resolved only mystically. *Mysticism* and *enthusiasm* are thus clearly connected, since both are characterized by the same capacity to reawaken and reinvigorate a static state of affairs.

With the third question, we turn to the role and nature of Christ himself, who is the true subject of this mystical re-interpretation or revolution. Christ is the living emblem of the reunification of opposites, and his preachings are a call to reunite with God in and through love. In the last pages of *The Spirit of Christianity*, the meaning of Christ's mystical agency emerges more clearly and more forcefully: Christ, asserts Hegel, had the consciousness of a *Schwärmer*. As we will see, *Schwärmerei* is inextricably linked both to inspiration (*Begeisterung*) and to mysticism; it brings them together and also represents their natural continuation. The first occurrence of Christ as *Schwärmer* in the Frankfurt text is particularly illuminating:

With the courage and faith of a man inspired by God, who is called by the learned an enthusiast (*Schwärmer*), Jesus made his appearance among the Jewish people; he came forth as new in his own spirit, the world laid in front of him as it should become, and the first relationship which he adopted with regard to the world was to appeal to it to become different, he began by calling out to everyone: change, because the kingdom of God is close [...].⁹⁴

In this passage, Hegel uses the expressions "man inspired by God" and *Schwärmer* interchangeably. A closer look at the defining features and historical role attributed by Hegel to the *Schwärmerei* of Jesus reveals quite clearly, however, that his use of

⁹² See *ibid.* the entry for *Begeisterer* in which a letter from Herder is cited: "‘aber dasz er sich fast in einen mystischen begeisterer darüber verwandelt, würden sie kaum glauben’. HERDER *bei Merck* 1, 35." The suggested Latin equivalent for the term is *inspirator* (*ibid.*) See also at *Begeisterung*: "‘er trank als dichter gern starke begeisterung’. *Siegfr. von Lindenb.* 1, 126." The case of Jakob Böhme is, in fact, exemplary with respect to this definition: see below (Chap. 2, Sect. 3.2.3.). The term *Begeisterung* is used repeatedly in *The Spirit of Christianity* in reference to the inspiration of the prophets (see TWA 1, 415).

⁹³ N, 321.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 325: "Mit dem Mute und dem Glauben eines gottbegeisterten Mannes, der von den klugen Leuten ein Schwärmer genannt wird, trat Jesus unter dem jüdischen Volk auf; er trat neu in eigner Geistesart auf, die Welt lag vor ihm, wie sie werden sollte, und das erste Verhältnis, in das er sich selbst zu ihr setzte, war sie zum Anderswerden aufzurufen, er fing damit an, allen zuzurufen: ändert euch, denn das Reich Gottes ist nahe". Hegel has eliminated the phrase: "der sich in die edle Tätigkeit für ein großes Objekt setzt", initially inserted between "eines gottbegeisterten Mannes" and "der von den klugen Leuten" (see *ibid.*). The choice to translate the term *Schwärmer* with *enthusiast* belongs to a long interpretive tradition, outlined clearly in DW.

the term conforms only superficially to a certain tradition. In reality, the text marks the beginning of an analysis of excessive enthusiasm which Hegel pursues into his mature writings, above all in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, and concludes with a complete rereading of the notion of *Schwärmer*, both with respect to its original meaning coined in the years of the Lutheran Reformation and to its common usage between 1700 and 1800.

In the early writings, Jesus's *Schwärmerei* is characterized by the following distinctive elements: Jesus is presented as a man inspired by God, and his divine enthusiasm is expressed through the unwavering resoluteness of his faith (*Glauben*). His *Schwärmerei*, however, is not simply a matter of religious faith: it involves above all a belief in the possibility of radical change, both at a religious and a social level. For this very reason, Jesus sees himself as a new man, summoned to transform and rehabilitate a world that lies at his feet in order, ultimately, to transform it into that which it should become. The *Schwärmer*, in this sense, enjoins to nothing less than a genuine revolution,⁹⁵ an *Anderswerden* which aspires to bring about a new beginning, announced in the language of prophets (the political tenor of the *Schwärmer's* action is not in fact a Hegelian invention; it features in Luther's description of the enthusiast as social agitator and remains central to several important eighteenth-century re-interpretations).⁹⁶ The *Schwärmer's* prophetic disposition and attitude of dissent are already present in Luther's polemical first use of the term *Schwärmer*. Luther and his contemporaries used the term to refer both to early supporters of the Reformation, such as Karlstadt, who subsequently condemned its growth and evolution, and to advocates of a mystico-apocalyptic vision, in particular the Anabaptists.⁹⁷ In this context, *Schwärmerei* was already understood as a form of dissent – a challenge not to the Judaic world, however, but to the official Lutheran doctrine. The term was used almost exclusively by members of the orthodoxy and always in a pejorative sense; the *Schwärmer*, with a few exceptions, never described themselves as such.⁹⁸ The etymology of the term is particularly revealing: the verb *schwärmen* refers to the swarming movement of bees and alludes therefore to the incessant and (apparently) chaotic movement of insects.⁹⁹ Luther seizes upon the destabilizing

⁹⁵ On the close relation between the notions of enthusiasm and revolution, see Bodei (1987), 23.

⁹⁶ See Crescenzi (1996), particularly chapter 1.

⁹⁷ See Lange (1967), 151–152.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 151: "Der Begriff wird von den renitenten Frommen selbst kaum gebraucht, sondern gehört zum Vokabular der Orthodoxie, bleibt seiner Absicht nach polemisch, wendet sich gegen jeden anti-orthodoxen Revisionismus und versucht, die schwärmerische Haltung ideologisch zu diskreditieren."

⁹⁹ DW, *sub voce*: *Schwärmen*. Coleridge's explanation of the etymological roots of *Schwärmerei*, which he translates as *fanaticism*, is particularly relevant here. See for example the beginning of chapter 2 of his *Biographia Literaria*, which reads: "Supposed Irritability of Men of Genius". Indeed, these men tend to seek out mutual support just as bees come together in swarms; but it is precisely this gregarious behaviour which is also, according to Coleridge, the source of a certain *irritability* among insects. This would explain the German use of the term *Schwärmerei* to refer to the behaviour of fanatics: "Cold and phlegmatic in their own nature, like damp hay, they heat and inflame by co-acervation; or like bees they become restless and irritable through the increased

implications of the motion of the bees (*schwärmen* also refers to *proliferation*, to *teeming*), making the *Schwärmer* into a dangerous agitator whose tendency to deviate from official doctrinal lines makes him very difficult to keep under control. For Luther, *Schwärmerei* corresponds to a pernicious inclination toward autonomous thought, a trespassing beyond the limits declared by the Reformation.¹⁰⁰

Hegel's decision to define Jesus as a *Schwärmer* thus raises a series of important questions. Clearly Hegel is not adopting Luther's definition of the term, and is polemical only insofar as he emphasizes that the term should be used only by educated people – an allusion to late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century debates over the meaning of the term.¹⁰¹ The enthusiasm of Jesus is interpreted by Hegel as a distinctive feature of his role, not in a pejorative sense, but as a pivot around which to construct his analysis of Jesus's relation to the Jewish world, to investigate the meaning of his fate and that of Christianity and, finally, to evaluate the extent of his success or lack of it. To this, Hegel adds an important specification:

With great benevolence, with the faith of a pure enthusiast, he [*Christ*] took their desire for a satisfied mind, their impulse toward completion and perfection, their renunciation of some previous relations, which for the most part were not brilliant, as freedom and healed or conquered fate. For straight after having met them he considered them capable, and his people ready to follow a broader announcement of the kingdom of God.¹⁰²

Christ brings to expression the need for a renewal of “a few pure souls” – as Hegel writes in the lines leading up to this passage – that is, more specifically, of those Jews who will decide to follow his teachings. The *Schwärmer*, in his *Gutmütigkeit*¹⁰³ (literally *benevolence* – a direct reference to the generosity and purity of Christ), exhorts the Jewish people to extricate themselves from “certain relationships” consisting of lifeless and static bonds; an exhortation which brings to mind Hegel's call for a mystical rethinking of the fractures of the Hebrew world. Simultaneously, Christ establishes himself as the bearer of an “impulse toward

temperature of collected multitudes. Hence the German word for fanaticism (such at least was its original import) is derived from the swarming of bees, namely *Schwärmen*, *Schwärmerei*” (Coleridge (1969–2002), vol. 1, 30).

¹⁰⁰ See for example Kemp and Heckmann (1998), 7: “Es war das Schwärmen der Biene, das zur Metapher für die Abweichenden und Andersdenken wurde”, and *ibid.*: “Martin Luther bezog das Wort Schwärmer auf den, ‘der abweichende Lehren des Glaubens hegt und verkündet’. [...] Dieses Wort herrschte im Glaubensstreit des 16. Jahrhunderts vor. Schwärmer war nachgerade ein Schimpfwort. ‘So wil ich nun abermalmich wider den Teufel sampt seinen Schwermen setzen’, sagte Luther. Schwärmen galten als Abtrünnige, die nicht im Besitz der göttlichen Wahrheit waren.”

¹⁰¹ For a discussion of the meaning and uses of the term *Schwärmerei* between 1700 and 1800, see below, Chap. 2, Sect. 3.2.2.

¹⁰² N, 325: “mit großer Gutmütigkeit, mit dem Glauben eines reinen Schwärmers nahm er [*Christ*] ihr Verlangen für befriedigtes Gemüt, ihren Trieb für Vollendung, ihre Entsagung einiger bisherigen Verhältnisse, die meist nicht glänzend waren, für Freiheit und geheiltes oder besiehtes Schicksal; denn bald nach seiner Bekanntschaft mit ihnen hielt er sie für fähig und sein Volk für reif, einer ausgebreiteten Ankündigung des Reiches Gottes zu folgen”.

¹⁰³ The association between *Schwärmerei* and *Gutmütigkeit* appears to be a commonplace. See, for example, Lange (1967), 151.

completion and perfection". Caught between reconciliation and renewal, his announcement gives rise to a tension, a new beginning founded on the promise to overcome all oppositions and make possible at last the union of man with God and with life.

Whether this promise can be fulfilled and whether this tension ends up in full completion, are the questions to which Hegel dedicates the conclusion of *The Spirit of Christianity*. The discussion ultimately relies upon an analysis of the characteristics of love, to which Hegel returns several times and from several different perspectives over the course of the text. For Hegel, the union proclaimed by Christ is, like the union of lovers and even the incorporation of divine love in the mystical object, caught in a complex web of insoluble contradictions. The problem crystallizes for Christ around the double nature, both human and divine, that represents and reveals the overcoming of the separation of earth and heaven so characteristic of Jewish religion. His human nature, that is to say the objectivity and exteriority of his individual existence, stands in conflict with a perfect fusion with the divine; the *schwärmerisch* impulse toward a resolution of all contrasts must, ultimately, come to terms with the impossibility of a complete and real unification in love: "then the individual, something objective, something personal, stands in opposition to the longing in the height of its enthusiasm, in the entrancements of the most subtly organized souls, breathing the highest love".¹⁰⁴ Enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*) is linked to yearning, to the motion of straining toward a goal. With an enthusiasm akin to a state of drunken intoxication, the *Schwärmer* seeks to actualize the "highest love", but the anticipated union remains eternally out of reach and the aspirations of the *Schwärmer* are condemned never to be fulfilled. A residual objectivity, that is to say the earthly condition of individuality, prevents perfect fusion with divine love from fully taking place.¹⁰⁵ As a *Schwärmer*, Christ announces the coming of a radical transformation that will remain forever incomplete; he preaches a love that cannot become a universal principle. Both Jesus and the sentiment of love are afflicted by the problem of individuality: if the former can overcome individuality only in death,¹⁰⁶ according to Hegel the latter cannot become anything more than a simple bond between individuals and cannot, therefore, become the vehicle of a perfect union with God.

For this reason, Christ's *Schwärmerei* acquires an additional connotation: though in appearance a pioneer, come to break with the past and lead the way to a reformed world, Christ is destined to fail; his *Schwärmerei* becomes the symbol of a struggle

¹⁰⁴N, 341: "denn dem Sehnen steht in seiner höchsten Schwärmerei, in den Verzückungen der feinorganisiertesten, die höchste Liebe atmenden Seelen immer das Individuum, ein Objektives, Persönliches gegenüber".

¹⁰⁵See *ibid.*, 334 where Hegel underlines the necessity of apotheosis for Christ to become fully divine; Christ's mortal individuality was rather the *mark of shame* that tarnished the picture of his divine perfection.

¹⁰⁶See *ibid.*, 317, where it is argued that Christ was fully aware of the necessity of losing his individuality through death: "Jesus hatte das Bewußtsein der Notwendigkeit des Untergangs seines Individuums".

that heralds an impossible change¹⁰⁷ or, in the words of Hegel, a struggle against fate.¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that the *Schwärmer's* intention is utterly meaningless, nor that his action is ineffective. Hegel distinguishes between two different types of *Schwärmer*: "An enthusiast who acts enthusiastically only for himself, welcomes death; but one who acts enthusiastically in order to achieve a broader plan, can only leave with pain the arena in which this was to have developed".¹⁰⁹ While the aims of the former remain personal and somewhat limited, the transformation announced by Christ as a *Schwärmer* is momentous and aims to affect the religious attitude of an entire people within the broader horizon and project of a life in common. For Hegel, this difference radically affects the relationship of the enthusiast to the possibility of his own death: while the first type of enthusiast embraces death as the limit and conclusion of a personal enthusiastic endeavour, it is lived by Jesus as a moment of painful separation. This separation is not the end point of the *Schwärmer's* undertaking; but is in a sense both a phase and the final act of this enthusiastic project. The main difference between the two enthusiastic approaches lies in the fact that Christ's *Schwärmerei* is not to be understood simply as a visionary dream: the scope of his action aspires to the implementation of a "grand plan" for it seeks to reach a concrete, and above all communal, objective. Christ's *Schwärmerei* is not an attempt to escape from this world but an attempt – albeit an *enthusiastic* one – to profoundly modify a concrete state of affairs, primarily represented by the unresolved contradictions ascribed to Jewish culture. If Christ is striving toward the application of an ideal – indeed, ideality is central to *Schwärmerei* – he cannot, as a result, avoid a confrontation with the concrete relations in which the Jewish life is said to consist.¹¹⁰

With regard to the detachment from reality and the flight to an ideal world which appears to characterize a certain type of *Schwärmerei*, Hegel writes:

The excessive enthusiasm [*Schwärmerei*] which despises life can very easily give way to fanaticism; indeed in order to maintain itself in complete absence of relations, it must destroy that by which it is destroyed and that which is impure for it (however highly pure it might be), and damage its content, often the most beautiful relations. Enthusiasts of later ages have turned the despising of all forms of life into an absolutely empty absence of form, because they are contaminated, and have declared war on every impulse of nature, merely because it seeks an external form.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ On the *Schwärmer's* overwhelming desire to *realize* an ideal (in the literal sense of 'making it real'), see Kemp and Heckmann (1998), 7.

¹⁰⁸ N, 329: "Kampf mit dem Schicksal."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 331: "jedem Schwärmer, der nur für sich schwärmt, ist der Tod willkommen, aber wer für einen großen Plan schwärmt, der kann nur mit Schmerz den Schauplatz verlassen, auf welchem er sich entwickeln sollte; Jesus starb mit der Zuversicht, daß sein Plan nicht verloren gehen würde."

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: "Indem es Jesu verschmähte, mit den Juden zu leben, aber mit seinem Ideal zugleich immer ihre Wirklichkeiten bekämpfte, so konnte es nicht fehlen, er mußte unter diesen erliegen".

¹¹¹ Ibid.: "Die lebenverachtende Schwärmerei kann sehr leicht in Fanatismus übergehen; denn um sich in ihrer Beziehungslosigkeit zu erhalten, muß sie dasjenige, von dem sie zerstört wird, und das, sei es auch das Reinste, für sie unrein ist, zerstören, seinen Inhalt, oft die schönsten Beziehungen verletzen. Schwärmer späterer Zeiten haben das Verschmähen aller Formen des

The “enthusiasts [*Schwärmer*] of later ages”, though not explicitly named in the text, are in all probability the Neoplatonists whose philosophical orientation, characterized by contempt for corporeity and “all forms of life”, is interpreted by Hegel as a form of *Schwärmerei* so extreme that it has become properly fanatical.¹¹² For Hegel, the evolution of enthusiasm into fanaticism takes place by way of a complete disengagement from the world of external relations (*Beziehungen*) which allows for a limitless “flight into the void”.¹¹³ Indeed, the line between fanaticism and enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*) is extremely fine, as Hegel emphasizes in the first lines of the passage cited above. It is in fact so fine that, in his desire for renewal and change, the *Schwärmer* can very easily succumb to an idealistic attitude that both rejects and despises life. If we follow Hegel's reasoning, Christ can be understood to operate precisely on this perilous frontier; but because the latter never loses contact with the world of concrete relations he cannot be described as a *fanatic*: in contrast to the Neoplatonists, his *Schwärmerei* does not lead to a dearth of relations (*Beziehungslosigkeit*) but aims, by acting on the hardened contrasts of “Jewish” religion, to bring about a series of reunifications. Christ's enthusiasm is so intimately linked to the act of *speaking mystically* discussed above, that Christ's *enthusiastic* action can, in fact, be coherently described as *mystical*.

Hegel does not discuss the various problems surrounding the role of enthusiasm (and of the enthusiast) any further in these particular pages. The study of some important occurrences of the term in Hegel's later works will, however, provide elements contributing to a better understanding of *Schwärmerei* as it is presented in the Frankfurt text. These occurrences will allow us to trace the evolution of Hegel's reasoning on this precise theme, from his early writings through to his later discussion of Jakob Bohme's *Schwärmerei*.

In conclusion to this section, it is worth underlining the following key features of Christ's *Schwärmerei* to which we will return in detail: firstly, the link between mysticism and *Schwärmerei* apparent in the *Schwärmer's* attempt to resolve all contrasts into a harmonious unity and *revitalize* a series of defunct relations; secondly, the aporias and contradictions described in *The Spirit of Christianity*, in particular the aspiration toward an impossible union and the necessary dissolution of the individual are integral to the action of the *Schwärmer*. In this sense, the *Schwärmer* appears as a spirit in conflict with his own time; a *courageous* figure engaged in a struggle against the world – which he seeks to mould into that which it *ought to be* – and against his own destiny. The unification toward which the enthusiast aspires so energetically is, in other words, as precarious, unstable, and ultimately impossible as the union of the human and the divine in the bread of the Eucharist handled by Christ.

Lebens, weil sie verunreinigt sind, zu einer unbedingten leeren Gestaltlosigkeit gemacht und jedem Triebe der Natur, bloß weil er eine äußere Form sucht, den Krieg angekündigt”.

¹¹²It is worth noting that Hegel interprets the *Schwärmerei* of the Neoplatonists rather differently in later years. I will return to this point in detail in Chap. 2, Sect. 3.2.1.

¹¹³N, 331: “Flucht ins Leere”. Cf. also ETW, 288.

2 Mysticism and Mystification: The Hegelian Attack on the Mystical Alienation of the Romantics and of the Followers of Schelling

The early writings, despite their lack of linguistic homogeneity (the term *mystisch*, in particular, tends to take on a variety of different meanings), clearly expose a bifurcation in Hegel's interpretation of the concept of mysticism: the fragments from Tübingen and Bern, and the criticism of the alienating character of the mystical union with the Divine on the one hand and, on the other, *The Spirit of Christianity* and a complex reflection on the mystical character of the Last Supper. The aim of this section is to show how this split not only persists in the mature writings, but is indeed reinforced and amplified. While Hegel develops a more precise understanding of the characteristics of the mysticism he defines as alienation – an attitude that emerges, in his view, in the early 1800s – he also specifies the elements which distinguish this attitude from a radically different mystical approach, in this case no longer incompatible with speculation.

2.1 *The Leap Beyond the Limit and the Pistol Shot in the Preface to the Phenomenology*

As discussed in the previous section, Hegel's approach to mysticism repeatedly encounters a series of corollary yet fundamental elements, such as enthusiasm, (prophetic) inspiration and ecstasy. It is around these elements that Hegel's famous attack, launched in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*, revolves. Understanding this attack is a prerequisite to any investigation into the reasons for his criticism of a particular type of mysticism in the mature writings. While it represents a decisive moment, the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* does not necessarily mark a break with respect to Hegel's earlier reflections on mysticism. In fact, it can be seen to express a moment of change, an evolution. As for Hegel's attack on a particular mystical attitude characteristic of some of his contemporaries, it is possible, moreover, to outline the stages of a journey that begins in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* and continues in the *Encyclopedia* (in particular in the prefaces to the first and second editions) as well as in certain reviews from the Berlin years – all of which will be examined below.

Hegel does not explicitly use the terms *Mystizismus*, *Mystik*, or even the adjective *mystisch* to refer to the position he intends to criticize in the opening pages of the *Phenomenology* and, as we will see, this absence is by no means accidental. Hegel's argument is grounded in the criticism of a certain way of understanding the absence of mediation, *Unmittelbarkeit*, a term that Hegel uses here to define the pretence according to which it would be possible to grasp the Absolute in an unmediated way. In this text from 1807, the notion of *Unmittelbarkeit* – around which the debate concerning the mystical nature of magnetic somnambulism had developed,

considering immediacy as the boundary between the natural world and the leap into the supernatural – is inextricably linked to the terms *Ekstase* and *Begeisterung* (a different type of *enthusiasm* to *Schwärmerei*). A careful analysis of Hegel's use of terminology reveals that Hegel's criticism of the theory by which it is possible to gain access to knowledge of the Absolute without recourse to any form of mediation, arises directly from his confrontation with the historical context described in the first part of the present book, a context which encompasses the fusion of mysticism and poetry typical of the *Romantik* as well as the later commingling of *Naturphilosophie* and theosophy.

Let us turn first to examine the precise nature of the ecstatic experience described in Hegel's attack, in order to determine toward whom it was directed. In an exemplary passage of the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel writes: "The beautiful, the sacred, the eternal, religion, and love are the bait needed to awaken the desire to bite, not the concept, but ecstasy, not the cold, advancing necessity of the thing but rather fervent inspiration should be what maintains and guides the expansion of the substance's wealth."¹¹⁴ Here, ecstasy is understood as the mirror opposite of conceptual rigor. The fervent inspiration ("gährende Begeisterung") with which ecstasy is commonly associated is presented as an alternative to the meticulously slow and emotionally detached progression proper – and indeed necessary – to conceptual reasoning. It follows that such an ecstatic approach promises to reach its goal without having to confront the long and rather less attractive path of the slow elaboration of the concept, of the "necessity of the thing". To this end, a series of "baits" are used in order to arouse an irresistible desire to be fooled, to be taken in: these are for Hegel alluring promises, but they cannot in reality be maintained, since the concept cannot be substituted by the immediacy and intuitive character of ecstasy.

A fragment from Hegel's *Wastebook*, written in the years immediately prior to the publication of the *Phenomenology*, exposes the origins of the attack formulated in the above-cited passage.¹¹⁵ In this fragment, Hegel argues that the terms "sacred, eternal, absolute, infinite" are in fact far more than simple linguistic expressions, for they refer to real powers (*Mächte*) capable of awakening the strongest emotional responses, leading to the experience of enthusiastic elevation – a state akin to that which he defines as ecstasy in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*. Feeling (*Gefühl*)

¹¹⁴GW 9, 13: "Das Schöne, Heilige, Ewige, die Religion und Liebe sind der Köder, der gefordert wird, um die Lust zum Anbeissen zu erwecken, nicht der Begriff, sondern die Ekstase, nicht die kalt fortschreitende Nothwendigkeit der Sache, sondern die gährende Begeisterung soll die Haltung und fortleitende Ausbreitung des Reichthums der Substanz seyn." My translation, but see Hegel (1977), 5.

¹¹⁵TWA 2, 551–552: "Die Worte *ewig, heilig, absolut, unendlich* ziehen den Menschen, der etwas dabei fühlt, in die Höhe, erwärmen, erhitzen ihn. Es sind Mächte, die ihn regieren, hinund herziehen, und das Zeichen ihrer Herrschaft über ihn ist, daß er bei ihnen sich *fühlt*. [...] Nur das Begreifen tötet sie als Macht. Es trennt sich von ihnen. Statt in ihrem Element zu liegen, ist es das Zurücktreten von ihnen und Durchschauen derselben, eine gefühllose Klarheit. Jene *Worte* erheben den Menschen, – wieviel mehr ihr Erkennen! Aber ihr Erkennen gibt dem Menschen, dem Ich, seine Freiheit, und die Erhebung ist die getilgte Hitze oder das (getilgte) Gefühl des Individuums." This passage is also quoted and discussed in Vieweg and Grüning (1994), 543.

is thus presented as the opposite of conceptual understanding¹¹⁶ and, as such, must be eliminated to make room for the purity of conceptual thought which may, in turn, unmask the perilous potential of these very words (sacred, eternal, etc.). Knowledge, Hegel concludes – and this is a point that should be particularly emphasized and remembered – elevates man to very different heights with respect to those which can be reached by yielding to the temptations of these empty sentimental baits.

Many have argued that the baits mentioned in the *Phenomenology* (and also in the *Wastebok* fragment), namely the beautiful, the sacred, the eternal and, more generally, religion and love, could be direct references to the vocabulary of Schelling's *Bruno*, and thus that Hegel's ironic attack was aimed specifically at Schelling, albeit without naming him.¹¹⁷ Krings (among others) has convincingly argued in favor of the idea that Hegel's attack was directed against certain followers of Schelling, rather than Schelling himself.¹¹⁸ One might also add Eschenmayer to the followers listed by Krings and united by their interest in mesmerism, namely Görres, the physician Windischmann, and Lorenz Oken, professor of medicine in Jena.¹¹⁹ According to Krings, Hegel is less concerned with Schelling's philosophy of identity than he is with the more superficial version of this philosophy provided by Schelling's followers, whose *Begeisterung*, one might add, is directed not only to Schelling's vocabulary but also to the immediacy characteristic of a certain approach to *Naturphilosophie*. It is worth recalling that the term *Ekstase* was favored by experts in animal magnetism to describe the condition of magnetized somnambulism.¹²⁰ In his *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, Rosenkranz writes that Görres, who interprets the state of magnetic somnambulism as a mystical condition, commits an error that may be defined as "Überschätzung des Ekstatischen", an overestimation of the ecstatic moment.¹²¹ Hegel's criticism is linked therefore, albeit indirectly, to the discussion on the nature of mesmeric mysticism.¹²² Indeed, in another passage of the Preface we read:

This frugality that renounces science must even less claim that such enthusiasm and turbidity be something higher than science. This prophetic speech believes that it remains right in

¹¹⁶As we have seen, Hegel interprets animal magnetism in terms of a *Gefühlsform* (see above, Chap. 1, Sect. 3.1.2).

¹¹⁷See Hegel (2000), 1067, note 3.

¹¹⁸Krings (1977), 16 and 19. See also Erdmann (1973), 55.

¹¹⁹On the influence of mesmerism on Görres' philosophical views see: Benz (1976), 19. On Windischmann's interest in the practice of mesmerism see Fortlage (1852), 188. Concerning the interpretation of mesmerism provided by Oken, see for example Gerabek, Haage, Keil and Wegner (2005), 905, where the connection between the theory of Mesmer and the doctrines of Brown and Gall, both strongly criticized by Hegel, is highlighted (on Brown's "leerer Formalismus" see for example TWA 9, 530; on Gall's *Schädelleere* – a play on words between *Lehre* (teaching) and *Leere* (void, emptiness) – see the notorious Jena critique in GW 5, 507). On Eschenmayer's theory of magnetism see also: Moiso (1976), 216–218.

¹²⁰See above, Chap. 1, Sect. 2.1.

¹²¹See Rosenkranz (1836), 53: "Görres zieht den Sonnambulismus, sogar die Seherin von Prevorst, in den Kreis des Mystischen." See also *ibid.*, 54.

¹²²See above, Chap. 1, Sect. 2.

the middle point and in the depth, looks contemptuously at determination (the *horos*), and intentionally stays away from the concept and from necessity, that is from reflection, which resides only in finitude. But just as there is an empty broadness, so also is there an empty depth [...].¹²³

In the aforementioned paragraph 406 of the *Encyclopedia*, magnetic ecstasy is described as a confused and turbid experience because its content does not present itself in rational form: for this reason the state of the somnambulist should not be considered as a possible path to cognition (*Erkenntnis*).¹²⁴ In the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* enthusiasm again characterizes the pseudo-philosophical position criticized by Hegel: this enthusiasm presents itself as something more elevated than science (*Wissenschaft*) and refuses conceptuality and the logical concatenation of reasoning. It reaches only a superficial depth, however, a depth of no scientific value in a Hegelian sense. In both texts, Hegel lampoons the supposed elevation (*Erhabenheit*) to which the two approaches (animal magnetism and sentimental enthusiasm) lay claim. If science is always and by definition an exoteric form of knowledge and in principle, therefore, accessible to all, partisans of *Begeisterung* and of the possibility of direct contact with the Absolute, as well as certain students of magnetic *Hellsehen*, present their own approaches as exclusive, extraordinary and therefore as esoteric.

The difference between esotericism and exotericism hinges upon the concept of immediacy, presumed to be the only way of accessing knowledge. The advocates of the attitude Hegel criticizes, he underlines, look upon *Bestimmtheit*, or determinateness, with suspicion. In the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* Hegel writes: "Only that which is completely determinate is at the same time exoteric, conceivable, and such that it can be learnt and be the property of all."¹²⁵ As a first approximation, then, we can see that while confronting determinateness leads to a shareable and exoteric form of knowledge, leaping into indeterminate immediacy produces only an esoteric pseudo-knowledge.

An additional remark, which appears in parentheses, in which Hegel seems to want to translate the German *Bestimmtheit* with the Greek term *horos*, that is to say *limit* or *boundary*, is particularly important here. The position criticized by Hegel presents itself as a leap beyond the limit, into the immediate perception (which is effectively a sentimental, perceptual approach) of the Absolute. Crossing the boundaries of all determinations, this approach *de facto* eliminates conceptuality, which is

¹²³ GW 9, 14: "Noch weniger muß diese Genügsamkeit, die auf die Wissenschaft Verzicht thut, darauf Anspruch machen, daß solche Begeisterung und Trübheit etwas höheres sey als die Wissenschaft. Dieses prophetische Reden meynt gerade so recht im Mittelpunkte und der Tiefe zu bleiben, blickt verächtlich auf die Bestimmtheit (den *Horos*), und hält sich absichtlich von dem Begriffe und der Nothwendigkeit entfernt, als von der Reflexion, die nur in der Endlichkeit hauset. Wie es aber eine leere Breite gibt, so auch eine leere Tiefe". My translation but see Hegel (1977), 6.

¹²⁴ On the translation of *Erkenntnis* into English see *Encyclopedia Logic*, xl–xlii. See also below, Chap. 3, footnote 190.

¹²⁵ GW 9, 15: "Erst was vollkommen bestimmt ist, ist zugleich exoterisch, begreiflich, und fähig, gelernt und das Eigenthum Aller zu seyn." My translation, but see also Hegel (1977), 7.

based on a slow and necessary series of mediations. In this way, immediacy is not only the enemy of conceptuality: it is not even a properly *philosophical* position, given that the scientific nature of philosophy lies for Hegel in the constant act of confronting the barrier of the *horos*, without which profundity remains empty, both in extension and in actual depth.

Due to the relatively 'open' character of Hegel's criticisms of aconceptual immediacy (Hegel does not name his targets directly) one may suspect that it concerns more of his contemporaries than those already mentioned above. A number of critics have noted that Hegel's attack on this philosophy of immediacy (or rather: anti-philosophy) might also be aimed at Jacobi and his conception of the relationship between faith and knowledge, as the expression "prophetic discourse"¹²⁶ in the passage above suggests. Here, Hegel argues that advocates of the immediate approach to the Absolute claim, speaking in prophetic tones, to be in contact with the center (*Mittelpunkt*), with the heart of profundity, while this prophecy is in reality as empty as the profundity it seeks to express. In a passage taken from the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in the section dedicated to Friedrich Schlegel, Hegel returns to this theme using the same kind of terminology, but with a few important additions:

The prophetic enunciation of truths that should be philosophical truths belongs to faith, to selfconsciousness, which though it contemplates the absolute spirit in itself, does not conceive itself as selfconsciousness, but rather posits the absolute essence beyond cognition, beyond selfconscious reason: so Eschenmeyer, Jacobi. This prophetic *speech* void of concept asserts, from the tripod, this and that regarding the absolute essence and demands that everyone should find it in this way in his own heart. The knowing of the absolute essence becomes a matter of the heart; it is a crowd of inspired people who speak, and each of them gives a *monologue* and actually understands the others merely through squeezing hands and in mute feeling. What they say are often platitudes, if they are considered for how they sound, the feeling, the gesture, the full heart are what must create the emphasis: taken in themselves they still say nothing. They surpass each other in inventions of the imagination, in covetous poetry.¹²⁷

Hegel provides two clear examples of the prophetic and anti-philosophical attitude already described in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*: Eschenmayer and Jacobi. Both, in his view, use a prophetic language that belongs to the realm of faith,

¹²⁶ See for example Simhon (2003), 48.

¹²⁷ *Werke* 15, 643–644 (cf. TWA 20, 417): "Das prophetische Aussprechen philosophisch seyn sollender Wahrheiten gehört dem Glauben, – dem Selbstbewußtseyn, das zwar den absoluten Geist in sich selbst anschaut, aber sich als Selbstbewußtseyn nicht begreift, sondern das absolute Wesen über das Erkennen hinaus, jenseits der selbstbewußten Vernunft setzt: so Eschenmayer, Jacobi. – Dieß begrifflose prophetische *Reden* versichert vom Dreifuß Dieß und Jenes vom absoluten Wesen, und verlangt, daß Jeder unmittelbar in seinem Herzen es so finden solle. Das Wissen vom absoluten Wesen wird eine Herzenssache, es sind eine Menge Inspirirter, welche sprechen, deren jeder einen *Monolog* hält und den Andern eigentlich nur im Händedrucke und im stummen Gefühle versteht. Was sie sagen, sind häufig Trivialitäten, wenn sie so genommen werden, wie sie gesagt werden; das Gefühl, die Gebehrde, das volle Herz ist es erst, welche ihnen den Nachdruck geben müssen, – für sich sagen sie weiter nichts. – Sie überbieten einander in Einfällen der Einbildungskraft, sehnstüchtiger Poesie." On the significance of Hegel's critique of the "prophetisches Reden" see also Hyppolite (1953), 124.

which in turn (and here Hegel is referring to Jacobi in particular), by making a leap beyond the horos of rationality, is placed beyond reason itself.¹²⁸ Prophetic discourse is aconceptual, because it deliberately puts itself beyond the limits imposed by logical reasoning, which – according to those who use prophetic terminology – cannot provide access to the most intimate knowledge of absolute spirit. Thus, Jacobi and Eschenmayer are claiming to grasp, through faith and with the prophetic language that derives from it, truths that should in fact be expressed in philosophical terms. In this way, the leap beyond the restrictions of reason, which this prophetic faith-based approach mistakenly believes it has definitively overcome, is also a leap beyond philosophy into a territory from which it is, according to Hegel, intrinsically impossible to derive *knowledge* in the proper sense of the term. That which is pronounced while sitting on the tripod, that is to say by those contemporaries of Hegel who express themselves in Delphic language, has no scientific value whatsoever and when these spoken (or written) words are interpreted in a literal sense they are, even in the best of cases, only platitudes.

Hegel calls “inspired” those who, like Jacobi and Eschenmayer, believe in a sentimental approach to the Absolute and deem knowledge of this Absolute to be a “matter of the heart”.¹²⁹ Inspiration, in this case, clearly means false inspiration. It is a state that seems to give access to the deepest secrets, while in fact it looks only onto a hollow center, an insubstantial abyss. That he does not use the term *Schwärmer* in this particular case – a term which, as we will see later, has a more complex and philosophically loaded meaning – but the derogatory term *Inspirierter*, may well be a conscious decision on Hegel's part (though the text is from a lecture and so was transmitted and filtered through an audience). As for “heart” and “feeling” (*Gefühl*), they become mere alibis, excuses not to express matters in clear and comprehensible terms. For Hegel, these alibis ultimately lead not to a wealth of meaning but to a silence as empty as the false knowledge that inspires them. Hegel's emphasis on feeling may also be meant as a way of criticizing the fideistic attitude of the pietists, confirming that pietism not only failed to influence the young Hegel in any meaningful way, but was even the target of his harsh criticism in his later years. It is no coincidence if Hegel's criticism of Jacobi and of his concept of faith runs parallel to a certain irony with respect to the “empty pietists”, as he writes in a fragment of the *Wastebook* already cited. Indeed, Jacobi was in contact with Rhineland pietists whose views are likely to have influenced him.¹³⁰ The same irony with respect to the

¹²⁸ Further on this topic see Pöggeler (1999), 32.

¹²⁹ The term *Herzensache* is reminiscent of Baader's *Fermenta Cognitionis*. Indeed, in the second *Vorrede* to the *Encyclopedia* Hegel quotes Baader to support the thesis according to which religion should not remain a “matter of the heart” but should be considered from the perspective of reason: “‘wollt ihr, daß die Praxis der Religion wieder gedeihe, so sorgt doch dafür, daß wir wieder zu einer vernünftigen Theorie derselben gelangen, und räumt nicht euren Gegnern (den Atheisten) vollends das Feld mit jener unvernünftigen und blasphemischen Behauptung: daß an eine solche Religionstheorie, als an eine unmögliche Sache, ganz nicht zu denken, daß die Religion bloße Herzensache sei, bei der man des Kopfs sich füglich entäußern könne, ja müsse’” (*Werke* 6, xxiv; cf. TWA 8, 27).

¹³⁰ See Weigelt (1995), vol. 2, 723.

pietists' lack of knowledge appears in the Jena fragment: knowledge is replaced by a silence devoid of any content.

Hegel's criticism of Eschenmayer and Jacobi hinges then on the opposition between faith and the logical and rational development of knowledge; for Hegel both authors propose a mistaken interpretation of immediacy, understood as a leap beyond the horos. Eschenmayer, author of the renowned *Die Philosophie in ihrem Übergang zur Nichtphilosophie* (*Philosophy in its Transition to Non-Philosophy*, 1803) and profoundly influenced by Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie*,¹³¹ argues that philosophy must necessarily cross over into its opposite, namely faith (*Glauben*) – the *Nichtphilosophie* to which he refers in the title.¹³² In this interpretation the postulates of philosophy can be approached and understood only by means of a revelation (*Offenbarung*), that is to say, in an unmediated way (*unmittelbar*).¹³³ Although Schelling remains a key point of reference for Eschenmayer, also with respect to his conception of *Naturphilosophie*, in *Philosophy in its Transition to Non-Philosophy* he argues that Schelling failed to give revelation a sufficiently central role: Schelling's philosophy of identity should, in short, be based more strongly on an immediately and consciously non-philosophical experience.¹³⁴ Eschenmayer even quotes directly from the dialogue *Bruno*,¹³⁵ indicating that the language of Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie* was filtered and made to adhere to a fideistic position far from Schelling's own intentions. The notoriously sarcastic passage in which Hegel compares a certain way of understanding the Absolute as an immobile and undifferentiated identity to the “night in which all cows are black” (or to a “formless white”),¹³⁶ appears, as a result, more appropriate to the consciously anti-philosophical interpretations of *Identitätsphilosophie* such as the one provided by Eschenmayer, than to Schelling's own philosophical position.

In Hegel's ironic attack, the immediacy to which Jacobi and Eschenmayer entrust themselves is, moreover, associated with a specific verb, *anschauen*, the meaning of which has already been noted in the context of the mysticism of animal magnetism. According to the prophetic and anti-philosophical position that Hegel criticizes, the Absolute can be attained and understood immediately, intuitively, almost as directly as the eye perceives its own nearby surroundings (*anschauen* contains the verb *schauen*, to look). Intuition (*Anschauung*) appears as the opposite of the concept

¹³¹ See Eschenmayer (1803), 24.

¹³² See *ibid.*, *Vorbericht* (unpaginated): “so werden Gegenstände der Nichtphilosophie solche seyn, welche weder für das Wollen noch Erkennen erreichbar sind.” See also *ibid.*, 26, where it is said that the passage to *Nichtphilosophie* is to be understood as a passage into faith.

¹³³ See Jantzen (1999), 82, where the problem is formulated in the following terms: “Das Grab, das die Spekulation sich gräbt und graben muß, bedeutet die Auferstehung des Glaubens”; or in other words: “Der letzte Schritt der Philosophie ist daher der erste zum Glauben, oder zur Nichtphilosophie.”

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* On the relationship between Schelling and Eschenmayer see: Massolo (1973), 153.

¹³⁵ See Eschenmayer (1803), 62.

¹³⁶ TWA 3, 51.

(*Begriff*)¹³⁷: while the latter possesses universal value, the former remains trapped within the confines of individual perception and transforms knowledge of the Absolute into a private event, into a “matter of the heart”, a “monologue” (as we read in the section on Schlegel in the *Lectures*).¹³⁸ In the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* we also find the famous expression in which Hegel enforces the distinction between concept and intuition, between conceptual rigor and feeling: according to the (unnamed) advocates of a philosophy of immediacy, the “absolute should not be conceived, but rather felt and intuited: not its concept, but its feeling and intuition should guide speech and come to be expressed.”¹³⁹

Although Hegel does not refer to Schelling directly, the latter writes to Hegel on 2 November 1807, objecting to this opposition between *Begriff* and *Anschauung*: “Thus I admit that until now I haven’t understood what you mean when you oppose concept to intuition. By the former you surely cannot mean anything other than what you and I have called Idea, whose nature it is indeed to have a side from which it is concept, and a side from which it is intuition.”¹⁴⁰ As Baum has shown, Schelling senses Hegel’s shift of position in the *Phenomenology*, for in earlier texts and in particular in the *Differenz-Schrift* Hegel had not excluded a certain type of intuition from the approach to knowledge of the Absolute.¹⁴¹

This distance between concept and intuition becomes one of the building blocks of Hegel’s critique both in the *Phenomenology* and in the passage from the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* quoted above. Anyone who maintains that the Absolute can be intuited – Hegel argues – founds his knowledge on a private experience but nevertheless lacks any true consciousness of what he is experiencing, since he does not possess the concept of self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*). From this perspective, intuition is necessarily an aconceptual (*begriffslos*) and unconscious (*bewußtlos*) approach to cognition: both the richness of the concept and the profundity of conscious awareness can be obtained only through a patient confrontation with the very limit (*horos*) that the “inspired” view with contempt and believe they can transcend with a quick leap into immediacy.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ See Eschenmayer (1803), 9–10: “Das, was uns von den Ideen unterrichtet, ist die intellektuelle Anschauung. Sie ist Anschauung, weil über den Verstand hinaus kein Begreifen möglich ist”.

¹³⁸ On the Hegelian distinction between *Anschauung* and *Begriff* see Inwood (1992), 58.

¹³⁹ GW 9, 12: “Das Absolute soll nicht begriffen, sondern gefühlt und angeschaut, nicht sein Begriff, sondern sein Gefühl und Anschauung sollen das Wort führen und ausgesprochen werden.”

¹⁴⁰ *Briefe* 1, 194: “So bekenne ich, bis jetzt Deinen Sinn nicht zu begreifen in dem Du den *Begriff* der Anschauung opponierst. Du kannst unter jenem doch nicht anderes meinen, als was Du und Ich Idee genannt haben, deren Natur es eben ist, eine Seite zu haben, von der sie Begriff, und eine, von der sie Anschauung ist.”

¹⁴¹ See Baum (1986), 32.

¹⁴² See for example Düsing (1983), 175: “diese Erkenntnis des Absoluten bedarf der endlichen Reflexion und ihrer antinomischen Bestimmungen, da sonst das Absolute nur in bewußtloser, unmittelbarer Anschauung, nicht aber im selbstbewußten Wissen gegenwärtig wäre.” On the evolution of the conception of *Anschauung* from the early writings to the *Differenzschrift* and to later texts, see Baum (1986), 30–31.

This emphasis on the absence of self-consciousness in the intuitive approach seems to echo Hegel's criticism of the *unio mystica* in the Bern fragments, in which immediate contact with God was described as a form of alienation and as a forgetfulness of self. The advocates of the "supernaturalist" attitude, those for whom only faith can guide man beyond the limits of logical reason, also remain deprived of any consciousness of self. Crucially, however, neither in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* nor in the aforementioned passage from the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* does Hegel speak directly of mystical experience. Instead, his argument revolves around the adjective prophetic (the "prophetic discourse" which was the starting point of the present discussion), the pejorative term *inspired* (found in the *Lectures*) and the word *Begeisterung* (inspiration, enthusiasm as a form of excitement), which in the *Phenomenology* is paired with *Trübheit*, literally, turbidity.

From the *Phenomenology* onwards, Hegel tends to define this type of sentimental and unphilosophical attitude as *Begeisterung*, a term that therefore requires special attention. Whereas in the early writings, the term *Begeisterung* did not bear a negative sense, but even came to represent a vital alternative to the rigidity of dogma (the dead letter) in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*, the meaning of this term undergoes a significant change.¹⁴³ Indeed, the term as it is used in the *Phenomenology* betrays a clear polemic intent. This does not contradict the basic idea that guides this investigation, namely that Hegel's mature writings develop a reflection on the nature of the mystical phenomenon that was already underway in the early fragments, thus avoiding the characterization of the *Phenomenology* as a mere breaking point, a rupture with the past, acknowledging instead its rather more complex role as a turning point. In fact, the change in the meaning of the term *Begeisterung* can be read as an attempt by Hegel to reach, through a series of distinctions, as accurate a definition as possible of that which may be properly defined as mystical. If the terms *Begeisterung*, *Schwärmerei* and the adjective *mystisch* seem intimately connected, indeed almost equivalent, in the early writings, from 1807 onwards Hegel begins to make a clear distinction between *Begeisterung* and *Schwärmerei*, and it is thanks to this differentiation that the characteristics of a specific philosophical approach can emerge, that is mysticism as a form of speculation.

In another passage of the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*, *Begeisterung* is associated with the image of a pistol shot, which refers ironically to the pretensions of those who think themselves capable of knowing the Absolute immediately, of reaching the goal instantaneously with the speed of a bullet. Hegel writes:

Knowledge, as it is initially, or the *immediate spirit*, is the spiritless, or it is the *sense-consciousness*. In order to become actual knowledge, or to produce the element of science, which is its pure concept, it has to labor its way through a long journey. This becoming [...] appears as something other [...] than inspiration, which begins immediately with the absolute knowledge, just like a shot from a pistol, and has already finished with other perspectives, by declaring that it will not consider them at all.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ See for example N, 305.

¹⁴⁴ GW 9, 24: "Das Wissen, wie es zuerst ist, oder der *unmittelbare Geist* ist das geistlose, oder ist das *sinnliche Bewußtseyn*. Um zum eigentlichen Wissen zu werden, oder das Element der

The immediacy of the pistol shot, which reaches its target almost as soon as it is fired, is opposed here to the slow development and the patient building up which scientific knowledge requires. The problem expressed by the metaphor of firing a pistol lies less in the act of positing immediacy as the origin of the path to knowledge, than in a certain failure to envisage an adequate development of this initial immediacy, thereby conflating the journey's starting point with its end. No evolution comes to mark the difference between the beginning and the end of the journey; instead the journey comes to its conclusion at the very moment in which it is begun: under the aegis of immediacy, beginning and end coincide. The "immediate spirit" must evolve, since in its initial immediacy it is in reality "spiritless" and only a "long path" that extends from the commencement to the conclusion can lead to knowledge in the proper sense. *Begeisterung* refers here to a sort of excessive acceleration, to the tendency to leap beyond the limit mentioned above. If science is to emerge only from a slow confrontation with the limit, then what *Begeisterung* employs is effectively an "anti-method" of knowledge ("the un-method of presentiment and inspiration", coupled with "the arbitrariness of prophetic utterance").¹⁴⁵

Like prophetic talk and premonition (*Ahnden*), *Begeisterung* is considered here as arbitrary and devoid of any intrinsic scientific value. In the *Science of Logic*, where the image of the pistol shot reappears, Hegel reiterates the argument though he phrases it slightly differently: whoever entrusts themselves to faith, to the belief in an inner personal revelation or to the immediacy of an intellectual intuition ("intellektuelle Anschauung"), lays claim to an absurd right, namely that of wanting to bypass the only means by which the goal may be successfully reached: method and logic.¹⁴⁶

The expression "intellektuelle Anschauung" refers to a complex debate between Hegel and a few of his contemporaries – above all Schelling, but also Hölderlin and Novalis¹⁴⁷ – as well as to a vast web of relations, the detailed reconstruction of

Wissenschaft, was ihr reiner Begriff ist, zu erzeugen, hat er durch einen langen Weg sich hindurch zu arbeiten. – Dieses Werden [...] erscheint als etwas anderes [...] als die Begeisterung, die wie aus der Pistole mit dem absoluten Wissen unmittelbar anfängt, und mit anderen Standpunkten dadurch schon fertig ist, daß sie keine Notiz davon zu nehmen erklärt." My translation, but see Hegel (1977), 15–16.

¹⁴⁵ GW 9, 36: "Wenn aber die Nothwendigkeit des Begriffs den losern Gang der rasonnirenden Conversation, wie den steifern des wissenschaftlichen Gepräges verbannt, so ist schon oben erinnert worden, daß seine Stelle nicht durch die Unmethode des Ahndens und der Begeisterung und die Willkühr des prophetischen Redens ersetzt werden soll, welches nicht jene Wissenschaftlichkeit nur, sondern die Wissenschaftlichkeit überhaupt verachtet." My translation, but see also: Hegel (1977), 29.

¹⁴⁶ See *Werke* 3, 60 (cf. TWA 5, 65–66): "Aber die moderne Verlegenheit um den Anfang geht aus einem weitem Bedürfnisse hervor, welches diejenigen noch nicht kennen, denen es dogmatisch um das Erweisen des Principis zu thun ist, oder skeptisch um das Finden eines subjektiven Kriteriums gegen dogmatisches Philosophiren und welches diejenigen ganz verleugnen, die wie aus der Pistole aus ihrer innern Offenbarung, aus Glauben, intellektueller Anschauung u.s.w. anfangen und der Methode und Logik überhoben seyn wollten."

¹⁴⁷ On the differences between Novalis and Hegel with respect to "intellektuelle Anschauung" see Vieweg and Grüning (1994), in which an important passage by Novalis is highlighted and quoted

which exceeds the scope of the present study. Several detailed examinations of this theme already exist: Tilliette, for example, argues that the term *Anschauung* is used in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* as a way of criticizing Schelling's conception of intellectual intuition as it is presented in *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie* (*Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy*)¹⁴⁸ of 1802 – although here too, arguably, Hegel is targeting followers of Schelling rather than Schelling himself. In the section of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* in which Hegel discusses Schelling's philosophy, we read for example:

Most of all, it [*Schelling's philosophy*] must be distinguished from the way in which his [*Schelling's*] epigones have on the one hand thrown themselves into a spiritless whirlpool of words about the absolute, partly due to misunderstanding of intellectual intuition, and have renounced conceptual cognition and, with it, the main moment of knowing, and speak from so-called intuition.¹⁴⁹

The metaphor of the pistol shot reappears in these same lectures, this time alongside the criticism of a particular type of inspiration, namely poetic inspiration (“poetische Begeisterung”), exposing another aspect of the attack already formulated in the *Phenomenology*:

In place of the seriousness of conceptual knowledge, of the sobriety of thought, a play with foolish inventions appears, inventions which are taken for profound intuitions, high sentiments, and also for poetry; and they believe themselves to be right in the center when they are on the surface. Twenty-five years ago the same happened with the art of poetry, that is that genius took it over and, almost blind, composed verses from itself, in poetic inspiration, just like from a pistol. The results were either madness or, if they were not mad, such flat prose that the content was too bad for prose. So it is also with these philosophies. What is not completely thoughtless blather about the point of indifference and polarity, oxygen, the sacred, the eternal, etc., are such trivial thoughts that one can doubt whether one has understood them correctly [...].¹⁵⁰

as follows: “‘Ekstase – Inneres Lichtphaenomen=intellektuelle Anschauung’” (see 540). On Hölderlin's conception of “intellektuelle Anschauung” see Tilliette (1988), vol. 1, 215–234.

¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Tilliette writes that in this text Schelling uses the notion of intellectual intuition in the following way: “Die intellektuelle Anschauung ist das Unauflösliche, Unmittelbarste, die lebendige Idee des Absoluten, der einfache Strahl der Identität, dessen Einschlag das Absolute produziert. Sobald man sich anschickt, sie zu erklären, einzuleiten, zu reflektieren, hat man sie sich verflüchtigen lassen. Das Absolute ist Selbstoffenbarung ohne Vermittlung, weder Resultat, noch Ableitung, Deduktion” (see Tilliette (1980), 22).

¹⁴⁹ *Werke* 15, 680 (cf. TWA 20, 451): “Am meisten muß von ihr das unterschieden werden, wie seine Nachbeter eines Theils sich in einen geistlosen Wortschwall vom Absoluten hineingeworfen haben: Theils aus Misverstand der intellektuellen Anschauung, das Begreifen und damit das Haupt-Moment des Erkennens aufgeben, und aus der sogenannten Anschauung sprechen.”

¹⁵⁰ *Werke* 12, 681–682 (cf. TWA 20, 452–453): “An die Stelle des Ernstes des Begreifens, der Besonnenheit des Gedankens tritt ein Spiel mit läppischen Einfällen, die für tiefe Anschauungen, hohe Ahnungen, auch für Poesie gelten; und sie meinten recht im Centrum zu seyn, wenn sie auf der Oberfläche sind. – Vor 25 Jahren ist mit der Dichtkunst derselbe Fall gewesen, daß die Genialität sich derselben bemächtigte, und geradezu blind aus sich heraus, wie aus einer Pistole, in der poetischen Begeisterung dichtete. Die Produkte waren entweder Verrücktheit, oder, wenn sie nicht verrückt waren, so platte Prose, daß der Inhalt für Prose zu schlecht war. – So auch in diesen Philosophien. Was nicht ganz gedankenloses Gewäsche vom Indifferenzpunkt und der Polarität, –

The link to the passage of the *Phenomenology* discussed above is unambiguous. To begin with, Hegel employs the same terms which in the *Preface* were defined as perilous, such as “sacred”, “eternal” and so on. In this case, it is clear that Hegel’s criticism is not aimed at Schelling directly, but at specific interpretations of his philosophy of indifference which lack the same philosophical depth. Indeed, the above-cited passage comes shortly after the note on the difference between Schelling and his servile followers (*Nachbeter*) to which I have already referred. The text contains, unchanged, a series of elements around which the attack in the *Phenomenology* is built: the opposition between the seriousness of conceptual thought and play, seemingly innocuous but interwoven with shallow prophecies and trite intuitions. To this, however, Hegel adds a reference to *poetry* (in the sense of *Poesie*), a key concept for the Jena Romantics, intrinsically linked to the Romantic elaboration of a mystical approach and to the initial reception of Jakob Böhme’s mysticism in particular.¹⁵¹ It was Tieck’s love of *Poesie* that led him to the discovery of Böhme’s writings while, for Schlegel, Böhman mysticism even came to represent a precise moment in the evolution of *Poesie* toward its Romantic formulation. For the early Romantics, mysticism and *Poesie* formed a sort of dyad, and Jakob Böhme could be interpreted precisely as a mystico-poetical figure.

Several elements suggest that Hegel’s critique was directed against the Romantics: the keyword of the Jena Romantics, *Poesie*, is associated with *genius*, which itself refers to the Romantic *Genie*, and above all to the expression “poetic inspiration” (*Begeisterung*).¹⁵² Thus the criticisms voiced in the *Phenomenology* are enriched with a new element, namely the denunciation of Romantic *Poesie*, and with this denunciation Hegel distances himself from the mystico-poetical enthusiasm of the Romantics, which he sees as an example of the mystical superficiality which arises from a limited reading of Schelling. Hegel alludes to the Romantics in order to highlight the conceptual emptiness of philosophies (in the plural) that seek inspiration from Schelling’s *Indifferenzphilosophie*. Like various other products of

Sauerstoff, dem Heiligen, Ewigen u.s.f., sind solche triviale Gedanken, daß man darum zweifeln kann, man habe sie richtig aufgefaßt”.

¹⁵¹ See above, Chap. 1, Sect. 1.2.

¹⁵² While the concept of *Begeisterung* is clearly used pejoratively in the texts considered here, it is deemed important from the point of view of the *Aesthetics*, where this type of inspiration represents a non-negligible element in the creation of a work of art by the artist (in particular see TWA 13, 370–373). Of course, this view is not in reality at odds with Hegel’s thesis in the *Phenomenology*, in which his critique is directed against attempts to use *Begeisterung* as a foundation for philosophical argumentation: when given this function, *Begeisterung* finds itself disqualified and out of place, given that it belongs rather to the aesthetic world of the artist, for whom it even appears to be indispensable. But the following passage from the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in which Hegel expresses his admiration for Bruno’s philosophy, illustrates that his use of terminology is not perfectly coherent (cf. V 9, 52): “In den Schriften des Bruno zeigt sich vornehmlich die lebendigste Begeisterung des Gedankens.” Here, rather than being opposed to philosophical thought, *Begeisterung* is considered integral to it (cf. V 9, 54: “Die Begeisterung einer edlen Seele, ein tiefes Denken tritt in diesen Untersuchungen hervor”), but the terminology of these *Lectures* must be considered with caution given that the text was not written by Hegel directly.

Romantic poetic inspiration, for Hegel these philosophies lack any properly conceptual depth.¹⁵³

The same argumentative structure may be observed in a short text from the *Wastebook*: Hegel comments ironically on the Romantic *Genie* that several of Schelling's followers apply indiscriminately to the field of philosophy, and in particular to *Naturphilosophie*. The latter is, in Hegel's words, debated using an utterly arbitrary jargon, that is to say using "irrational analogies and intellectual illuminations worthy of a drunk".¹⁵⁴ The main targets here are Görres and J. J. Wagner, both of whom were considerably influenced by Schelling's philosophy of nature. In a review from the Berlin years, Hegel addresses the intuitionism specifically of Görres, stating that it is as confused as it is fanciful and unphilosophical; for Hegel, the intuition on which Görres intends to found his analysis of the *Weltgeschichte* is merely a functional alibi employed to justify the absence of any proper demonstrations.¹⁵⁵

Hegel turns to *Poesie* and the mysticism of the Romantics in another review from this period, devoted this time to the writings of Solger. Given that Hegel employs the terms *Mystik* and *Mystizismus* directly in this text, referring to their Romantic usage and, above all, shedding light on the link that ties the mystical pretensions of the Romantics to the rediscovery of Böhme, the text deserves to be considered in detail.

2.2 Hegel's Review of Solger's Writings and the "Mystical Tendency" of Romanticism

In Hegel's review, the posthumous edition of Solger's writings, edited by his friend Tieck, is interpreted as a microcosm in which the central themes of his *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* are taken up again.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Hegel criticizes the same unmedi-

¹⁵³ Hegel may well be referring here to the excesses of the "Sturm und Drang" movement and in particular to Kleist (who is criticized explicitly in the *Solger-Rezension*), as well as to Tieck.

¹⁵⁴ See GW 5, 489: "Wie es eine dichterische Genie periode gegeben hat, soscheint gegenwärtig die *philosophische Genieperiode* zu sein. Etwas Kohlenstoff, Sauerstoff, Stickstoff und Wasserstoff zusammengeknetet, und in ein von Anderen mit Polarität u.s.w. beschriebenes Papier gesteckt, mit einem hölzernen Zopf der Eitelkeit etc. Raketen in die Luft geschossen, meinen sie, das Empyreum darzustellen. So Görres, Wagner u. A. Die roheste Empirie mit Formalismus von Stoffen und Polen, verbrämt mit vernunftlosen Analogieen und besoffenen Gedankenblitzen." See the same fragment in *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 355: "Wie es eine dichterische Geniesprache gegeben hat, so schien gegenwärtig die *philosophische Genieperiode* zu sein."

¹⁵⁵ The text by Görres reviewed by Hegel in *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (2, no. 55–58) has the following title: *Über Grundlage, Gliederung und Zeitfolge der Weltgeschichte. Drei Vorträge gehalten an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München von J. Görres, Breslau 1830*; Hegel's review can be found in *Werke* 17, 249–276 (cf. TWA 11, 487–513).

¹⁵⁶ On the characteristics of the so-called *Solger-Rezension*, in which Hegel experiments with a particular innovative structure, see Jaeschke's introduction to his edition of the *Berliner Schriften (1818–1831)*: Hegel (1997), xlvii–liii.

ated approach to the Absolute, albeit from a rather different angle. First, Hegel uses the terms *Mystik* and *Mystizismus* to formulate his argument, while these terms do not appear in the *Preface*. As we have seen, in the *Phenomenology* Hegel attacks those who claim to be able to reach knowledge of the Absolute without recourse to any form of mediation, thanks to an “unmittelbare Anschauung”, an immediate intuition. The latter go on to affirm the superiority of faith (Jacobi), or more generically of feeling (the Romantics) over rational reasoning. This particular cluster of characteristics, it should be noted, contributed to define the notion of *mysticism* according to a commonplace in nineteenth-century studies of the topic.¹⁵⁷

In the Solger review, the terms *Mystik* and *Mystizismus* are principally employed in a pejorative sense, since Hegel intends to criticize Solger and above all Tieck's position¹⁵⁸ on the basis of their use of Romantic jargon, and in particular on the basis of their definition and use of the terms *Mystik* and *Mystizismus*. If Hegel's Solger review is read alongside the *Preface*, it becomes clear that the attack formulated in the latter is also directed against the mystical approach of the Romantics, an approach which represents for Hegel a form of pseudo-mysticism. By confronting the limits of Romantic mysticism, Hegel is progressively able to develop the characteristics and mark the boundaries of a completely different understanding of the term. Although traces of this understanding are already discernible in Hegel's review, it is largely developed elsewhere, as we will see in the following section.

Early on in his review Hegel declares Solger's correspondence with Tieck to be exemplary of the *literary and mystical* tendency of “that period” (referring to the decisive years of German Romanticism), in which mystical character and literary element are inseparable.¹⁵⁹ This co-mingling of mysticism and literature is already present at the heart of Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, a text the young Solger

¹⁵⁷ See for example Schmid (1824), 10–11: “Das Vorherrschendes Gefühls in der Religion nennt man nun Mysticismus. Damit soll also gesagt werden: der Mystiker sucht die Religion mehr unmittelbar, durch das Gefühl aufzufassen, als sie durch Begriffe und Beweise zu erkennen. Darin liegen zugleich einige Merkmale des Mystizismus: 1) eine größere Wärme im Vergleich mit der Verstandesreligion, in so fern man Wärme dem zuschreibt, was unmittelbar aus der Vernunft hervorquillt, Kälte dem abgeleiteten. 2) *Dunkelheit*, im Gegensatz der Klarheit und Deutlichkeit, die unsern Vorstellungen durch Begriffe gegeben wird.” On the approach characteristic of the mystics, Schmid writes (see *ibid.*, 15–16): “Die Mystiker erkennen nemlich die Beschränkung der menschlichen Vernunft, und die Unfähigkeit derselben, das Ewige und Göttliche zu begreifen, an. Aber den Glauben an das Göttliche leiten sie nicht wiederum aus der Vernunft ab, sondern sie schließen die Vernunft ganz davon aus, und stellen den Glauben außer und über die Vernunft. So erhalten sie nicht einen durch die Schranken der Vernunft bedingten Glauben, sondern einen unmittelbaren, unbedingten Glauben. Sie bleiben nicht bey dem negativen Auffassen des Göttlichen stehen, sondern sie wollen positiv das wahre Wesen desselben wahrnehmen. Ihr Glaube wird daher unmittelbare Anschauung.”

¹⁵⁸ It is worth noting that Hegel positively acknowledges Solger's understanding and usage of the term *Unmittelbarkeit* on several occasions. See for example *Werke* 16, 482 (cf. TWA 11, 250).

¹⁵⁹ See *Werke* 16, 447 (cf. TWA 11, 215–216): “Solger's enge Freundschaft mit Tieck führt die öftere Erwähnung der tieck'schen Produktionen herbei; dieser Theil des Briefwechsels ist besonders charakteristisch rücksichtlich der literarischen und der damit zusammenhängenden mystischen *Tendenz* jener Periode; wir wollen uns daher länger dabei verweilen.”

particularly liked: in the case of Novalis, Hegel takes *mysticism* to mean the “*idea* of a *mystical* history” that would represent the revelation of the divine on earth.¹⁶⁰ Hegel uses his review of Solger and of his literary production to investigate a system of relations internal to German Romanticism to which mysticism is fundamental.

The expression “mystical tendency of that period” (“*mystische Tendenz jener Periode*”) can be read in connection to the criticisms advanced in the *Phenomenology*, in which Hegel derides the altogether unscientific character of what he calls somewhat disdainfully the “representations of our time” (“*Vorstellungen unserer Zeit*”).¹⁶¹ In both cases Hegel is criticizing the mystical and unscientific approach of his *contemporaries*: the Romantics and followers of Schelling in general in the *Phenomenology*; Solger, Tieck and Kleist more specifically in the Solger review. Crucial here is the fact that Hegel’s criticism of ecstasy, *Begeisterung* and prophetic talk in the first text, and his criticism of the *Mystik/Mystizismus* pairing – to which we will now turn – in the second, is always and exclusively aimed at contemporary philosophical stances.

In the Berlin review, after his note on the correspondence between Solger and Tieck, Hegel embarks on his criticism of the mystical tendency of Romanticism with a sarcastic comment about the “arbitrary mysticism” of Kleist:

The self-falsification, which the poetic talent exercised against itself, is here aptly indicated. Kleist suffers from the general, sad inability to place the main interest in nature and truth, and from the impulse to look for it in distortions. The *arbitrary mysticism* supplants the truth of the human [emotional] mind through miracles of the [emotional] mind, through the fables of an internal life of the spirit which is supposed to be higher.¹⁶²

It is clear from Hegel’s pairing of the terms *wonder* (*Wunder*) and *fable* (*Märchen*) that the term *mysticism* (*Mystizismus*) is intended here in a decidedly pejorative way. For Hegel, Kleist’s mysticism is nothing more than a miraculous-sounding fable, as arbitrary as it is deceptive and misleading. Hence his reference to the poet’s self-deceit, as if to say that Kleist’s mysticism is not only communicated in poetic and fabular form, but has itself the inconsistency of a fable. This type of mysticism tends to assert the reality of a particularly elevated spiritual state, but – in line with what has already been said regarding the *Phenomenology* – here too we are dealing with a false elevation. Kleist’s arbitrary mysticism is merely a conscious, indeed self-conscious, attempt to transcend the real in order to reach a world as spiritual and marvelous as it is distant and alienating. Hegel defines this world using the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 446 (cf. TWA 11, 215): “die *Idee* einer *mystischen* Geschichte.”

¹⁶¹ GW 9, 48. Hegel, moreover, underlines the fact that the terms (or rather the ideas they communicate) *Schöne, Heilige, Ewige* – to which I have already referred – were in vogue at the time (GW 9, 40).

¹⁶² See *Werke* 16, 449–450 (cf. the slightly different formulation in TWA 11, 218): “Die Selbstfälschung, welche das dichterische Talent gegen sich ausübte, ist hier treffend angegeben. Kleist leidet an der gemeinsamen, unglücklichen Unfähigkeit, in Natur und Wahrheit das Haupt-Interesse zu legen, und an dem Triebe, es in Verzerrungen zu suchen. Der *willkürliche Mysticismus* verdrängt die Wahrheit des menschlichen Gemüths durch Wunder des Gemüths, durch die Märchen eines höher seyn sollenden inneren Geisteslebens.”

same term that he had used earlier in the Bern fragments: *fremd* (foreign, estranged).¹⁶³

The heart of the discussion surrounding the Romantic conception of mysticism is only reached, however, with Hegel's criticism of Tieck. Tieck's approach is characterized too by a predilection for faith at the expense of philosophical knowledge.¹⁶⁴ The previous section on the Romantic reception of Böhme's mysticism already examined a passage from the *Solger-Recenzion* in which Hegel mocks Tieck's confession that he tackled his first readings of mystical texts (including the writings of Jakob Böhme) with "sacrilegious levity".¹⁶⁵ Hegel emphasizes that Tieck was particularly fascinated by Böhme's "lively imagination", immediately adding that the equally monstrous lack in this mysticism becomes apparent only to the needs of thought.¹⁶⁶

It is crucial to understand that Hegel's criticism is primarily directed at the *manner* in which Tieck interprets mysticism in general, a manner which also influences Tieck's approach to the writings of Böhme and his judgments about those aspects he considers most worthy of note. For Tieck, Böhme is an author gifted with the most fervent imagination; his writings are described as marvelous and extraordinary treasures, as nothing less than a *Wunderland*. The enormous shortcomings of such a form of mysticism – Hegel argues – are either completely silenced or misinterpreted, since they pertain to the "exigencies of thought" that Tieck does not wish to address. The nature of these shortcomings was already partially addressed in Hegel's correspondence with van Ghert: Böhme expresses himself metaphorically, through images. Hegel's criticism of Böhme's "terrible shortcoming" in the Berlin review should therefore be considered in its precise context (a context that I will discuss in greater depth in the third chapter of the present study), rather than simply regarded as a negative appraisal of Böhmanian mysticism.

The core of Hegel's argument resides more in his analysis of the crucial difference between that which Tieck holds as important and that which he disregards in his reading of Böhme's *Theosophia Revelata*: in both cases Tieck's interpretation is at odds with Hegel's own. The crucial problem that Hegel discerns in Böhme's writings is the intense and unrelenting struggle between speculative depth (a depth that is full, unlike the empty depths described in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*) and its expression. For Tieck, in contrast, this struggle is a false problem: what is extraordinary about Böhme is precisely the imaginary, almost hypnotic, confusion that characterizes his writings. Tieck approaches Böhme's works as a land of mar-

¹⁶³ See *ibid.*, 449 (cf. TWA 11, 218).

¹⁶⁴ The clear opposition between faith and knowledge refers, of course, to Tieck's position and not to that of Hegel. Tieck, as Hegel himself relates, openly states that *thought* is not the central features of his work. *Ibid.*, 458 (cf. TWA 11, 226): "In demselben Zusammenhange sagt aber Tieck, daß es ihm 'nie um das Denken als solches zu thun gewesen'; 'die bloße Lust, Übung und Spiel der Ideen, auch der kühnsten, ist mir uninteressant.'"

¹⁶⁵ See above, Chap. 1, Sect. 1.2.1.

¹⁶⁶ *Werke* 16, 459 (cf. TWA 11, 227): "die ebenso ungeheure Mangelhaftigkeit in diesem Mysticismus aber wird allerdings nur dem Bedürfnisse des Gedankens auffallend."

vels, in which he wishes to be carried away and lose himself. In contrast, for Hegel, it is more a matter of finding a way to the rediscovery of the speculative kernel of Böhme's thought, without sinking into the fantastical and, as we will see, often excessive and misleading language through which it is expressed.

Tieck interprets mysticism (and Böhme's mysticism in particular) as a leap into the realm of the *marvelous*, of the *phantasmagorical*,¹⁶⁷ elevated above and beyond thought and conceptuality. The mystical approach is then a sentimental approach: Tieck – Hegel underlines with sarcasm – often tried to communicate to others his experience of mystical feeling, that is to say of the inspiration which opens the way to a superior reality, extraneous to conceptual thought.¹⁶⁸ The link with Hegel's criticism in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* is evident in the reiteration of the opposition between enthusiastic inspiration on the one hand and the conceptuality of philosophical method on the other. Up to this point in the review, Hegel uses the terms *Mystik* and *Mystizismus* to describe an anti-philosophical approach which fits perfectly within the framework of his criticism in the *Phenomenology*. As I have already noted, *Mystik* and *Mystizismus* are used interchangeably and pejoratively throughout the review.

Hegel, however, weaves a series of brief, yet significant, comments into this text regarding the proper understanding of mysticism and of its relationship to inspiration and to speculation. Hegel's criticism of the Romantic use of the term *Mystizismus* is evident. It can be recognized in a passage in which he states that it would surely have been more appropriate if Solger and Schlegel had altogether eliminated the term from their philosophical lexicon, along with the terms *Ironie*, *Religion* and *Philosophie*. For Hegel, behind these terms, Solger and Schlegel were in reality only concealing the emptiness of their discussions.¹⁶⁹ The following passage, with which we return to Hegel's criticism of Tieck's approach to mysticism, bears witness to Hegel's explicit efforts to part with the Romantic use of these terms:

If Tieck, precisely with regard to this, was not satisfied with Franz Baader, Hamann, St Martin, etc., from this aspect, what impeded him from finding for instance in Plato, not to mention others, the desired unification of the inspired [emotional] mind and the reason and intellect that account for it? Evidently only the ignorance and unfamiliarity with being at ease in the way in which thinking reason presents the genuine content of inspiration, in order to find the same content in it; or the preposterous demand to see the turbid ferment and phantasmagoria of mysticism connected with the philosophical way of knowing, which cannot be combined with it.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ See *ibid.*, 460 (cf. TWA 11, 228).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 464–465 (cf. TWA 11, 233).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 459–460 (cf. TWA 11, 228): “Wenn Tieck ebendas. durch Fr. Baader, Hamann, St. Martin u.s.f. nach dieser Seite nicht befriedigt worden, was hinderte, z. B. bei *Plato*, um nicht Andere zu nennen, die verlangte Vereinigung des begeisterten Gemüths und der davon Kunde und Rechenschaft gebenden Vernunft und Verstandes zu finden? Offenbar nur die Unkenntniß und Ungewohntheit, in der Art, wie die denkende Vernunft den ächten Gehalt der Begeisterung darstellt, sich so zurecht zu finden, um denselben in dieser wieder zu erkennen, – oder die verkehrte Forderung, mit der philosophischen Erkenntnisweise auch das damit unverträgliche trübe Gähren und die Phantasmagorie des Mysticismus verbunden zu sehen.”

Hegel is critical of Tieck's statement according to which mystical illumination produces "a harmonious unification of all forces" in the spirit of the enthusiast: inspiration would appear to fold even the intellect (*Verstand*) and reason (*Vernunft*) into this state of perfect fusion.¹⁷¹ In Tieck's understanding, however, reason and intellect seem to be crushed by the weight of mystical inspiration, which he interprets as a state of enthusiasm so irrational that it completely engulfs the intellectual faculties of the one by whom it is experienced.¹⁷²

Concerning the relationship between enthusiasm and rationality, Tieck – writes Hegel – appears not to partake in the tradition of interpretation to which Baader, Hamann and Saint-Martin are linked as examples. Given that the above-cited passage immediately follows the discussion of Tieck's reception of Böhme, it is probable that Hegel is referring to the interpretative context reconstructed in an earlier section of the present study, in which the connections between Baader and Saint-Martin featured prominently.¹⁷³ Hegel responds to Tieck's attempt to resolve the problem of the balance between mystical inspiration and rationality by granting superiority to the former with a remarkable example: Plato. Without having to make a choice between the two, Platonic philosophy provides, in Hegel's view, the possibility of conceiving their relationship philosophically. The unequivocal choice of Tieck, for whom enthusiasm necessarily implies the abandonment of the basis of rational thought, is due to *ignorance*: Tieck fails to understand how "the thinking reason exposes the genuine content of inspiration". It is clear, therefore, that from Hegel's point of view, thinking reason and inspiration should not be conceived as absolute opposites. In fact, reason can develop what he defines as the true content of mystical inspiration.

These remarks are revealing, located as they are within a text that confronts the jargon of the Romantics and where the meaning of mysticism is not discussed independently from a criticism of Romanticism but is in fact pivotal to this criticism. Another indication can be found a little further on, when Hegel criticizes – using an eloquent "(?!)" – Tieck's use of the term *Spekulation*, which the latter associates to the mystical feeling that arises when entering into contact with the "inner life".¹⁷⁴ The word speculation is entirely incongruous here. Or rather, speculation is not at all extraneous to the context of mysticism (as was pointed out in the previous chapter), but it is the Romantic understanding of *mysticism* (*Mystizismus/Mystik*) which

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² See for example *ibid.*, 460 (cf. TWA 11, 229): Tieck claims to want to read Böhme and Tauler in complete solitude, in order to remain exclusively in contact with the "wonders of his [emotional] mind" ("Wunder seines Gemüths").

¹⁷³ Hamann's reception of Böhman mysticism is also important to this discussion. See Koyré (1929), 504, who locates Hamann among the most significant nineteenth-century readers of Böhme. In his introduction to volume 11 of Baader's *Sämtliche Werke*, Hamberger notes, however, that Hamann remains more cautious and less enthusiastic than Baader with respect to Böhme's mysticism (Baader (1851–1869), vol. 11, xvii).

¹⁷⁴ See *Werke* 16, 460 (cf. TWA 11, 229): "Er fügt diesem Gemälde hinzu, daß, da er nun die *Spekulation* (!?) und das *innere Leben* gefunden zu haben glaubte, er dafür hielt, 'daß es sich mit weltlichen Beschäftigungen nicht vertrüge'".

is now exposed as an empty and alienating representation. As a result, the relationship between mysticism and speculation must be entirely reconsidered beginning with the redefinition of each term. Of course, this process of *redefinition* of the word mysticism had already started before Hegel wrote this review and the prefaces to the first and second editions of the *Encyclopedia* represent an interesting case-study in this respect. An analysis of some significant passages from these two prefaces will allow us to conclude this examination of Hegel's critique of that unmediated approach to knowledge of the Absolute – which the Romantics so readily, yet so inappropriately, qualified as *mystical*.

2.3 *From Mystification to Mysticism*

The preface to the first edition of the *Encyclopedia* concludes with a dedication to the “interest in knowing the truth” which can at times, Hegel acknowledges, express itself in the form of immediate knowledge or feeling. This genuine interest, however, can only reach its desired goal (knowledge in the proper sense of the term) if the philosophical kernel, which can be found even at the heart of the mystico-sentimental approach, is developed with the support of rationality.¹⁷⁵ Hegel reiterates his criticism of the tendency of the “new era” to see knowledge of the idea as a pleasure (Hegel uses the term *Genuß*) which may be reached both instantaneously and effortlessly.¹⁷⁶ To this tendency he opposes the need for a more thorough approach: only by venturing laboriously into the greatest depths can the true heights of philosophical knowledge be reached.¹⁷⁷

In the preface to the second edition, Hegel resumes his criticism of the improper use of the term *Unmittelbarkeit*. Immediacy is described in this context as an “arid category”.¹⁷⁸ It is under the pretense of immediacy that the prejudice arises according to which philosophical reasoning is unsuited to the discussion of “religious objects”: with philosophy cast aside, the immediacy of intuition would be able to lead directly to the contemplation of the delicate object in question.¹⁷⁹ In another passage Hegel adds: “We have, one can say, *enough* of the purer or more turbid figurations of truth, and in *abundance* – in religions and mythologies, in gnostic and

¹⁷⁵ *Werke* 6, xi (cf. TWA 8, 13).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, x–xi. Already in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* Hegel writes that the science proper to philosophy will be reached only when the rigor of the concept has penetrated into the depths of the Thing (GW 9, 11: “und wenn diß noch hinzukommt, daß der Ernst des Begriffs in ihre Tiefe steigt, so wird eine solche Kenntniß und Beurtheilung in der Conversation ihre schickliche Stelle behalten.”)

¹⁷⁸ *Werke* 6, xiv (cf. TWA 8, 16).

¹⁷⁹ With respect to this, see also Hegel's ironic comment concerning Jacobi's conception of *faith* (*ibid.*, xxv; cf. TWA 8, 28).

mysticizing philosophies of past and recent times".¹⁸⁰ Just as he did in the preface to the first edition, Hegel seems to attenuate here the acerbic tone of his condemnatory attack in the *Phenomenology*, opting for a rather more cautious position. Even approaches grounded in facile misinterpretations of immediacy may contain a kernel worthy of being rediscovered. The main problem of these approaches lies in their *form*. Philosophy can still use this diverse and variable material as a starting point, and through mediation, rational reasoning, it can work to rediscover that which has been buried and forgotten under the aridity of sentimental intuition. Nonetheless, Hegel makes several important distinctions: he distinguishes between ways of expressing the truth that are more or less pure and more or less turbid (the adjective *trüb* is used once again).

His use of the adjective *mysticizing* (*mystizierend*) in this context is certainly not accidental. As we have seen with respect to *mysticizing* philosophies contemporary to the author of the *Encyclopedia*, in this case too Hegel directs his criticism toward the shortcomings of certain Romantic and pseudo-mystical interpretations, but this time he focuses on the problem of expressive form and allows for the possibility that a philosophically rich content might be expressed albeit in an inadequate form. With respect to gnosis, Hegel is referring primarily to Baader and in particular to his rediscovery of Böhme; a rediscovery which inscribes itself within the framework of Baader's philosophical project as an attempt to regain the sources of gnostic thought. Hegel stages a confrontation with Baader on the topic of gnosis, which propels his argument well beyond the confines of the criticism of the period's mysticizing tendency. This criticism began in the *Phenomenology* with Hegel's attack on certain interpretations of Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie*.

First, if Hegel initially argues somewhat vaguely that truth manifests itself in different, more or less pure configurations (*Gestaltungen*), he nonetheless goes on to trace a clearer dividing line within a particularly large and heterogeneous cluster of examples including mythologies, religions, new mysticizing philosophies etc.. Although his reference to religion (with an allusion, in the preface, to Jacobi), to "mysticizing philosophies" and to the anti-philosophical use of immediacy are comparable to the cardinal points of his critique in the *Phenomenology*, his reference to Baader and to his way of understanding gnosis marks in reality a sharp change of course.

What is most elevated, profound and intimate has been brought to light in religions, philosophies and works of art, in more or less pure, in clearer or more turbid, often very frightening forms. It must be counted as a special merit of Franz von Baader the fact that he, with deep speculative spirit, proceeds to explicitly dignify the content of such forms from a scientific point of view, not just to bring back the memory of them. He does this by explaining and substantiating the philosophical idea in them.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., xxvii (cf. TWA 8, 30): "An reinern und trübern Gestaltungen der Wahrheit haben wir, kann man sagen, *genug* und *zum Überfluß*, – in den Religionen und Mythologien, in gnostischen und mystizierenden Philosophien älterer und neuerer Zeit".

¹⁸¹ Ibid., xxv (cf. TWA 8, 28): "Das Erhabenste, Tiefste und Innerste ist zu Tage gefördert worden, in den Religionen, Philosophien und Werken der Kunst, in reinerer und unreinerer, klarerer und trüberer, oft sehr abschreckender Gestalt. Es ist für ein besonderes Verdienst zu achten, daß Herr

Baader's work provides a good example of the method already anticipated and previously suggested by Hegel. This method concerns the possibility of re-elaborating from a philosophical point of view that which presents itself inadequately in religion, mythology and more generally in all the relatively confused forms of knowledge outlined above. Baader should, in Hegel's view, be credited for the fact that he brought the light of science to several of these forms, revealing the philosophical ideas upon which they rely. Hegel cites *one* particularly important example: the discovery of the philosophical content of Böhme's writings. By bringing Baader into the discussion, and by recognizing the great importance of his work on Böhme, Hegel modifies the tone of his critique significantly.

It is worth remembering that in the preface to the first edition of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel had opposed the superficiality of the immediate approach to the depth of rational philosophical reasoning. Baader attempts a similar philosophical operation with respect to Böhme: he descends with speculative spirit into the philosophical *depths* concealed at the heart of Böhme's writings.¹⁸² As I have already shown, Baader's interpretation of Böhme is framed within a precise context, in which pietism, theosophy and an interest in alchemy all play an important role. It is this very field of inquiry that Hegel defines here as Baader's *gnosis*, an approach also reliant on a variety of religious and mythological sources. In contrast to the false profundity of the pseudo-mysticism of the Romantics, Baader's pursuit reveals a genuine speculative depth both in its breadth and in its intensity (to use the vocabulary of the *Phenomenology*): "Herr Baader's gnosis, which connects itself to similar figurations, is an idiosyncratic way of sparking and promoting philosophical interest; it sets itself strongly against both the sedation of the contentless bleakness of Enlightenment-ism and the piety which only wants to remain intense."¹⁸³

Hegel makes a clear distinction between Baader's work and the empty forms he had criticized earlier in the *Phenomenology* (despite certain shared characteristics or, better still, despite some common sources of inspiration). This appraisal of Baader's work notwithstanding, Hegel underlines the fact that gnosis is not Baader's *only* method of attaining knowledge, stating that he also uses religious and mythological notions. Baader's speculative objective never limits itself to these latter approaches, however, and is never exhausted by them.¹⁸⁴ In this way, Hegel creates an indirect parallel between Baader and Böhme: just as Baader used images and

Franz v. Baader fortfährt, solche Formen nicht nur in Erinnerung, sondern mit tief speculativem Geiste ihren Gehalt ausdrücklich zu wissenschaftlichen Ehren zu bringen, indem er die philosophische Idee aus ihnen exponirt und erhärtet."

¹⁸² The last quoted passage continues as follows: "*Jacob Böhme's* Tiefe gewährt insbesondere hierfür Gelegenheit und Formen" (*ibid.*, xxv; cf. TWA 8, 28).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, xxvi (cf. TWA 8, 29): "Die Gnosis des Hrn. v. Bader, welche sich an dergleichen Gestaltungen anschließt, ist eine eigenthümliche Weise das philosophische Interesse anzuzünden und zu befördern; sie stellt sich kräftig eben so sehr der Beruhigung bei der inhaltsleeren Kahlheit der Aufklärerei als der nur intensiv bleiben wollenden Frömmigkeit entgegen."

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, xxvi (cf. TWA 8, 29): "Hr. v. Bader beweist dabei in allen seinen Schriften, daß er entfernt davon ist, diese Gnosis für die ausschließende Weise der Erkenntnis zu nehmen." Hegel is careful to distinguish Baader's gnosis from that of F. A. G. Tholuck. In his view, the latter is a confused

representations from various sources to construct his own philosophical approach, so Böhme's vocabulary betrays a variety of influences. Particularly important for Böhme was the terminology of religion itself, which he amplified and stretched in such a way as to use it to express the "highest problems of reason":

This powerful spirit has rightly been called *philosophus teutonicus*; he has partly expanded the content of religion for itself into a universal idea; in this content he has conceived the highest problems of reason and in it he has tried to grasp spirit and nature in their more determinate spheres and figurations, by assuming as foundation that the spirit of man and all things were made in the image of God, no other God, to be sure, than the *triune* one; and they are only alive in order to be reintegrated from the loss of their original image; partly he has, on the contrary, used violently the forms of natural things (sulphur, salpeter etc., the sour, the bitter etc.) as spiritual forms and forms of thought.¹⁸⁵

Through this parallel, Hegel is able to move from Baader and his way of understanding gnosis, to Böhme, one of the most important points of reference for Baader's speculation. Hegel's digression on "the teutonic philosopher" is particularly interesting because Hegel does not provide a portrait of Böhme and of his philosophy from Baader's point of view, but from his own point of view. Hegel's praise for Baader's rediscovery of the philosophical depth of Böhme is instrumental in presenting his own, not Baader's, approach to Böhme's mysticism. Even the meaning of "gnosis" undergoes an important and sudden modification.¹⁸⁶ After vague initial references to the liminal phenomena that are defined as *figures* and representations, Hegel expresses his understanding of the term gnosis as the discrepancy, the gap, between the concept and the form in which the concept comes to be expressed. Indeed, he writes:

It [*gnosis*] has in itself its inconveniences, its metaphysics does not advance to the consideration of categories themselves nor to the methodical development of the content; it suffers from the inadequacy of the concept to such wild or ingenious forms and figurations; just as it generally suffers from the fact that it has the absolute content as *premise*, from which it explains, argues and confutes.¹⁸⁷

obscurity which, for Tholuck, ultimately replaces any other method of attaining knowledge (see *Werke* 6, xvi–xvii; cf. TWA 8, 19). See also HL, 407–408.

¹⁸⁵ *Werke* 6, xxv–xxvi (cf. TWA 8, 28–29): "Diesem gewaltigen Geiste ist mit Recht der Name *philosophus teutonicus* zugelegt worden; er hat den Gehalt der Religion theils für sich zur allgemeinen Idee erweitert, in demselben die höchsten Probleme der Vernunft concipirt, und Geist und Natur in ihren bestimmtern Sphären und Gestaltungen darin zu fassen gesucht, indem er zur Grundlage nahm, daß nach dem Ebenbilde Gottes, freilich keines andern als des *dreieinigen*, der Geist des Menschen und alle Dinge geschaffen und nur dieß Leben sind, aus dem Verluste ihres Urbildes dazu reintegrirt zu werden; theils hat er umgekehrt die Formen der natürlichen Dinge (Schwefel, Salpeter u.s.f., das Herbe, Bittere u.s.f.) gewaltsam zu geistigen und Gedankenformen verwendet." See also E (UTET), vol. 1, 104.

¹⁸⁶ It is worth noting here that, in his introduction to Baader's *Gesammelte Schriften zur Societätsphilosophie* (in Baader (1851–1869), vol. 5, lxxiv), Hoffmann criticizes Hegel's definition of Baader's philosophy as *gnosis*. Hoffmann does not seem to notice, however, the variety of meanings encompassed by the term *gnosis* in Hegel's interpretation. In Hoffmann's view, Baader's philosophy is not gnostic; rather, it is the "neuschelling'sche Philosophien", that is to say the pseudo-mystical orientations we have already discussed, that feed on "gnostic errors [*Irrthümer*]".

¹⁸⁷ *Werke* 6, xxvi (cf. TWA 8, 29): "Sie [*die Gnosis*] hat für sich ihre Unbequemlichkeiten, ihre Metaphysik treibt sich nicht zur Betrachtung der Kategorien selbst und zur methodischen

While seemingly constructing his argument around Baader and his interpretation of Böhme, Hegel is in fact doing something else. Indeed he performs two parallel operations. On the one hand he continues to make differentiations within the confused group of sources previously sketched, in which his criticism of the mysticism of his contemporaries was mixed and entangled with phenomena of different kinds; on the other hand, he uses the example of Baader to initiate a discussion concerning one particular representation whose conceptual richness, while present, is not expressed in an adequate or suitable form. But Hegel does not keep to Baader's interpretation of Böhme. This most emblematic example of the 'gnostic' discrepancy between form and content is used to articulate the crucial elements of his own way of rediscovering Böhme's philosophy.

In the brief paragraph dedicated to Böhme, Hegel returns to the role of violence (*Gewalt*)¹⁸⁸ which he had already evoked in another digression on Böhme, in his letter to van Ghert of 29 July 1811. Again, in the preface to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel describes Böhme as a "violent" spirit, insofar as he "violently" created a language of his own in an attempt (which could be termed "gnostic") to bridge the abyssal gap between that which must be communicated and the means by which it may be communicated. On the one hand, Böhme radically extended the spectrum of meanings associated with the religious terms he used; on the other he 'spiritualized' terms that ordinarily referred only to natural things, such as sulphur (*Schwefel*). In the following section the problem of the Divine triplicity will be addressed through a detailed examination of the texts in which Hegel insists upon the fundamental speculative importance of this conceptual structure in Böhme's philosophy. Böhme's description of the threefold movement of the Divine is for Hegel the most characteristic example of the way in which Böhme twists and forces a religious image, in this case that of the Holy Trinity, to make it fit into one of the greatest "problems of reason", namely the internal mobility not only of the Divine but also of creation itself. According to Böhme – in Hegel's reading – all things are created in the image of a God who moves in a triadic fashion and communicates the same impulse to his creation. In other words, the triadic movement on which Böhme insists, using a religiously derived vocabulary, is said to contain the very structure of dialectic movement. Though it is expressed using a vocabulary derived from the turbid language of religious representations, the nucleus of meaning must be recognized for its philosophical, speculative value.

Returning briefly to the problem of gnosis, the fundamental element of Hegel's reasoning (and that upon which the possibility of making the aforementioned distinctions depends) resides in the tension generated by the attempt to express purely and conceptually that which is gnostically given in a turbid and highly fanciful manner. If the relationship to the "gnostic source" – an expression which comes to embrace a variety of phenomena, including the writings of Böhme – is construed as

Entwicklung des Inhalts fort; sie leidet an der Unangemessenheit des Begriffs zu solchen wilden oder geistreichen Formen und Gestaltungen; so wie sie überhaupt daran leidet, daß sie den absoluten Inhalt, als *Voraussetzung*, hat und aus derselben erklärt, räsonniert und widerlegt."

¹⁸⁸ For an in-depth discussion of the role of violence in Hegel, see Morfino (2000), in particular 52 on the relationship between violence and power, *Gewalt* and *Macht*.

a re-elaboration in conceptual terms of a hidden philosophical depth, then philosophy emerges enriched from its confrontation with this mythico-religious (and ultimately mystical) substrate.

For Hegel, this is precisely the merit of Baader. But, just as the digression on Böhme reflected Hegel's interpretation more than Baader's own, here too the way of understanding the relationship to gnosis, and more fundamentally the meaning of gnosis itself, clearly belong more to Hegel than to Baader. As we have already seen, the key elements of Baader's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism diverge significantly from the framework in which Hegel relates to the writings of Böhme. The emphasis on the distance between speculative depth and its (more or less adequate) expression is clearly Hegelian. It is in fact a crucial aspect of Hegel's reading of *Theosophia Revelata* to which we will return. As Hegel notes, the problem at the heart of all of Böhme's writings is that of creating a language capable of communicating the content of the mystical revelation: Jakob Böhme had also recognized the importance of confronting the 'gnostic' discrepancy between the concept and its expression to which Hegel alludes in these pages.

Using Baader and his rediscovery of *Theosophia Revelata* as his starting point, Hegel guides his reader to a rather unexpected conclusion. On the one hand, he draws a clear line between the neo-mystical forms (Romantic or Schellingian), whose appeal to immediacy conceals only the philosophical void upon which they are founded, and *formations* that possess, in contrast, a speculative depth that needs to be revealed; the interpretive questions posed by the latter are, in Hegel's view, of a completely different nature from those of the former. On the other hand, by venturing well beyond the limits of Baader's interpretation, Hegel indicates the grounds of his own rediscovery and reevaluation of Böhme's mysticism.

Further evidence may be gleaned from the preface to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia*. Indeed, several elements attest to the subtle yet noticeable emergence of the principal characteristics of Hegel's approach to the 'impure' forms behind whose turbidity lurks a speculative depth that should be appreciated as such. By distancing himself from Baader's approach, Hegel attempts to find his own way to the rediscovery of a particular "figuration" that emerges in this text and stands out from the general group of gnostic representations outlined above: the mysticism of Böhme. By recognizing the traces of Hegel's progressive characterization of Böhman mysticism, as well as his effort to disentangle it from a more general backdrop of philosophies of immediacy, two misinterpretations to which many readers of the 1827 *Encyclopedia* fell prey can be avoided. Rosenkranz argues that it is precisely on the basis of Hegel's appraisal of Baader and Baader's "favorite", Böhme, in the *Preface* that some of his contemporaries accused him of leaning toward the same "Romanticism" that he began to criticize from the *Phenomenology* onwards: "the *Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen* especially used his praise of Böhme as a powerful spirit, rightly called *philosophus teutonicus*, in order to give him the reputation of nonsensical eccentricity, of mysticism inimical to reason."¹⁸⁹ And yet,

¹⁸⁹ HL, 407: "die *Göttinger gelehrten Anzeigen* benutzten besonders sein Lob Böhme's als eines gewaltigen Geistes, als des mit Recht sogenannten *philosophus Teutonicus*, ihn in den Ruf des verstandlosen Excentricität, des antivernünftigen Mystizismus zu bringen."

Hegel's appreciation of Böhme's speculative depth is by no means based on a mirror opposition between reason and irrationality, between concept and representation. On the contrary, Hegel shows how it is possible to bring to conceptual maturity that which is already present in Böhme's writings, albeit in a form not yet adequate to its content. The speculative nucleus of Böhme's mysticism is not irrational or inimical to conceptual reasoning, but perhaps better characterized as 'pre-rational', as subject to a tension that seeks to express its philosophical content adequately. Thus, the profundity of Böhme's philosophy is clearly open to evolution, it is not a static mass of irrationality: it can be fully understood and developed only when conceptual reason successfully infiltrates it and elaborates it in its own language.

If this interpretation is faithful to Hegel's own approach, then the criticism of Hegel published in the *Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen* is clearly unfounded. Hegel does not fall prey to the same Romantic mysticism he had criticized in the *Phenomenology* and derided in his Berlin review of Solger: indeed, the preface of 1827 demonstrates his resolve to distinguish this type of mystical irrationalism from a far more complex and versatile mystical form, primarily exemplified by the hidden, subterranean speculative complexity of the writings of Böhme. Given, moreover, that Hegel does not regard Böhme as an irrational thinker but as a "violent" spirit in search of an expressive form adequate to the speculative foundations of his thought, no accusation of irrationality can be transferred from Böhme to Hegel either. Hegel's positive appraisal of Böhme's mysticism should not be understood as an adhesion to "irrational mysticism".

Even Rosenkranz's response to those who accuse Hegel of mystical and irrational eccentricity remains on the same level as the position that Rosenkranz intends to criticize. Rosenkranz maintains the same opposition between philosophy and mystical gnosis, between the rational and the irrational, while Hegel is alluding in fact to the possibility of a third way, an alternative approach. Hegel establishes a fertile relationship with Böhme's mysticism, a relationship able to bring to maturity the philosophical content contained therein. If, for Hegel, irrational mysticism (found for example in certain philosophies inspired by Schelling) is an emptiness of thought masquerading as plenitude, some forms of mystical thought do nonetheless contain a wealth of speculation. This speculative core should not be ignored, but rather discovered and re-elaborated. Using the same terminology that appears in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel concludes this preface by stating that the mystery (*Mysterium*) enclosed within such formations must finally be unveiled so as not to remain a secret (*Geheimnis*):

Just as in the manifestations of the time which we have considered in this preface, the impetus of thinking, though deformed, is announced, so is it in and for itself a need for the thought conformed to the height of spirit and for its time (and only thus worthy of our science) that what earlier was revealed as Mysterium, but which remains something mysterious for formal thought in the purer and to an even greater extent in the more turbid figurations of its revelation, shall be revealed for thought itself. In the absolute right to its freedom, thought affirms the stubbornness of reconciling itself with the genuine content, only insofar as this content was able to give itself the form which is at the same time the

most worthy, that is the one of the concept, of necessity, which combines everything, content as well as thought, and therein makes it free.¹⁹⁰

In all the cases mentioned by Hegel (Böhme being the primary example discussed in this text) it is a matter of exposing, in the crystalline and necessary form of the concept, a content that would otherwise be condemned to the silence of a closed and impenetrably mysterious secret. According to Hegel, this content is exposed by an “impetus of thought” (“Drang des Denkens”). This impulse is, as we have seen, also an impulse *toward* thought, a movement internal to these very historical forms, charged with meaning but still in a state of immaturity. For Hegel, Jakob Böhme is a particularly emblematic case. Once again Hegel pushes well beyond the limits of the arid opposition between the rationality of thought and the esoteric irrationality of mystery: the mystery is inhabited by an impulse toward its own revelation in the accomplished form of the concept. It is a matter then of *giving form* to this impulse, of fostering its progressive emancipation and leading it toward a stage in which philosophical content and expressive form may finally correspond.

To bring out the mystery in the light of the concept and to grasp the content of forms of thought such as Böhme's mysticism, it is necessary, Hegel concludes, to venture into their depths and not simply to contemplate their surface of gnostic and cabalistic phantasmagoria.¹⁹¹ The adjective “gnostic”, which assumes various meanings over the course of this text, points in these last lines toward something obscure, cabalistic and ultimately very dangerous insofar as it detracts from the understanding of the true depths which are to be found elsewhere. In this text, Hegel employs an elastic and non-specific terminology in order to outline the substantial differences between the mystical, irrational and empty alienation of his contemporaries, and these other approaches in which each surface conceals an unsuspected depth. As we will see in the next chapter, Hegel chooses to use the specific term *Mystizismus* – in its original, that is to say literal and etymological, sense – to refer to the latter group.

Having clarified these essential distinctions, it is now possible to reconstruct the bases upon which Hegel grounds his appreciation of Böhme's Teutonic philosophy, but also of other phenomena (*Zeiterscheinungen*, as he writes in the second preface to the *Encyclopedia*) that share some of its fundamental traits. This investigation brings to the fore a second meaning that Hegel associates with the word *mysticism*,

¹⁹⁰ *Werke* 6, xxviii (cf. TWA 8, 30–31): “Wie in den Zeiterscheinungen, auf welche wir in diesem Vorwort Rücksicht genommen, sich der Drang des Denkens, obgleich verunstaltet, ankündigt, so ist es an und für sich für den zu der Höhe des Geistes gebildeten Gedanken selbst und für seine Zeit Bedürfnis, und darum unserer Wissenschaft allein würdig, daß das, was früher als Mysterium geoffenbart worden, aber in den reinern und noch mehr in den trübern Gestaltungen seiner Offenbarung dem formellen Gedanken ein Geheimnisvolles bleibt, für das Denken selbst geoffenbart werde, welches in dem absoluten Rechte seiner Freiheit die Hartnäckigkeit behauptet, mit dem gediegenen Inhalte sich nur zu versöhnen, insofern dieser sich die seiner selbst zugleich würdigste Gestalt, die des Begriffs, der Nothwendigkeit, welche alles, Inhalt wie Gedanken, bindet und eben darin frei macht, zu geben gewußt hat.”

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, xxviii (cf. TWA 8, 31).

thus shedding light on the bifurcation of meaning already discernible in his early writings. The terms mysticism, speculation and *Schwärmerei* will be central to this discussion, echoing the terminological constellation that Hegel had already begun to develop in *The Spirit of Christianity*.

3 Mysticism and Speculation

In the concluding pages of the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel writes:

Meanwhile I can consider that if what is excellent in Plato's philosophy, for instance, is sometimes placed in his myths, which are valueless from the point of view of science, there have also been times, which are even called times of excessive enthusiasm, during which Aristotelian philosophy was regarded for its speculative depth, and Plato's *Parmenides*, certainly the greatest work of art of ancient dialectics, was considered to be the true disclosure and the *positive expression of divine life*, and even despite the many obscurities in the products of ecstasy, this misunderstood ecstasy in fact was not intended as anything other than the *pure concept* – and further, that what is excellent in the philosophy of our time places its value precisely in scientificity [...].¹⁹²

This passage already contains some of the core elements that will be developed in this section. These elements are closely interwoven, forming a structured network around Hegel's attempt to outline the characteristics of a mystical attitude distinct from the one previously considered. In this text, as in the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel lets the possibility of an alternative conception emerge directly from the foundations of his critique, and in particular through the unexpected twist in meaning applied to some key words in the argument.

The crux of the above quotation lies in the use of the term “ecstasy” (*Ekstase*). As we have seen, Hegel's criticism of the Romantics and of followers of Schelling is based on their preference for the feverish heat of ecstasy over the coldness of the concept. But – Hegel adds in the closing lines of the preface – ecstasy, as it was understood in times of excessive enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*), is nothing but the “pure concept”, despite the *turbidity* it so often produces or through which it is expressed. This turbidity has obscured the true, conceptual, nature of that which ecstasy has at times brought to expression. Once again Hegel seems to be arguing that ecstasy and concept, like Gnosticism and speculative depth in the second preface to the *Encyclopedia*, do not have to be considered as opposites. The pure concept

¹⁹² GW 9, 48–49: “Inzwischen kann ich bedenken, daß, wenn z.B. zuweilen das Vortreffliche der Philosophie Plato's in seine wissenschaftlich werthlosen Mythen gesetzt wird, es auch Zeiten gegeben, welche sogar Zeiten der Schwärmerei genannt werden, worin die Aristotelische Philosophie um ihrer speculativen Tiefe willen geachtet und der Parmenides des Plato, wohl das größte Kunstwerk der alten *Dialektik*, für die wahre Enthüllung und den *positiven Ausdruck des göttlichen Lebens* gehalten wurde, und sogar bey vieler Trübheit dessen, was die Ekstase erzeugte, diese misverstandne Ekstase in der Tat nichts andres als der *reine Begriff* seyn sollte, – daß ferner das Vortreffliche der Philosophie unserer Zeit seinen Werth selbst in die Wissenschaftlichkeit setzt”.

can be apprehended even through the turbid and impure form of ecstasy – and Hegel provides a specific example here.

But what are those periods that Hegel calls times of *Schwärmerei*, and to which philosophical current is he referring? Hegel has the Neoplatonists in mind, probably Proclus and Plotinus in particular, as is obvious from the reference to Plato and Aristotle as principal sources of inspiration, as well as to the centrality of ecstasy.¹⁹³ According to Hegel, the Neoplatonists saw the *Parmenides* as the most appropriate expression of the divine life that emerges fully in the pages of Plato's dialogue. The ecstasy of which (and *in which*) they speak consists therefore in the recognition of the speculative depth of the *Parmenides*, which remains for Hegel the text most representative of ancient dialectics. The depth of Platonic philosophy and of this dialogue in particular, as identified by the Neoplatonists, is by no means devoid of content: just as we saw at the end of the previous section, the problem consists in expressing its speculative core in a more or less adequate form. Indeed, the speculative content of the *Parmenides* (but also of Aristotelian philosophy) was rediscovered and communicated by the Neoplatonists in a form as confused as it was inappropriate; it was expressed in a manner that failed to conform with the communication of the concept, in spite of arising directly from it. The Neoplatonists rediscovered with "enthusiasm", and expressed "ecstatically", the philosophically relevant core of Plato's writings. The Neoplatonists, Hegel stresses, correctly identified the conceptual depth of these texts, while his contemporaries focus their attention on the most superficial aspect, the Platonic myths that Hegel considers to be deprived of scientific value. Thus, Hegel's criticism of his contemporaries' incapacity to distinguish between depth and surface emerges once again. His contemporaries limit themselves to an ecstatic approach which, rather than communicating something even if only inadequately, remains empty and deprived of speculative substance.

The criticism becomes even harsher. Indeed, it is necessary to ask: *by whom* is Neoplatonism characterized as a period of excessive enthusiasm? Hegel's use of the term *Schwärmerei* demonstrates in fact an unambiguously polemical intent. The connection between excessive enthusiasm and ecstasy (understood in a positive sense as the form in which a conceptual core is expressed) reveals most clearly the originality of Hegel's approach to the problem of the relationship between enthusiasm, mysticism and philosophy compared to that of his contemporaries. In Hegel's discussion, the meaning of the term *Schwärmerei* (as already with *Ekstase*) takes on a particular inflection; in this case one that deviates significantly from the ordinary use of the term in the first half of nineteenth century. This question was already partially addressed in relation to the Romantic reception of Böhme's philosophy and to the definition of Böhme as a *Schwärmer*. The problem will now be considered from a different angle by examining some influential interpretations of the relationship between enthusiasm and philosophy to which Hegel is implicitly responding in the passage from the *Phenomenology* quoted above.

¹⁹³ See Hegel (2000), 1070, notes 65 and 66.

First, it should be noted that the terms we have already considered – ecstasy, enthusiasm, speculative depth, and Divine revelation – are articulated in a very specific way in this passage. In the case of the Neoplatonists, Hegel interprets ecstasy as the enthusiastic expression of a speculative content, an expression that is impure yet still connected to a conceptual depth. Hegel's elaboration (or rather his *rediscovery*) of a positive conception of mysticism begins with the interconnection of these terms and the perception of their interdependency. Hegel's evaluation of the profound, not superficial, character of the enthusiastic ecstasy of the Neoplatonist represents an anchor point to which he returns repeatedly, and to which we too will need to return over the course of this reconstruction.

The distinction between two radically opposed conceptions of mysticism which is apparent in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* as well as in several other Hegelian texts relies on a series of subtle terminological distinctions (such as the uncoupling of *ecstasy* into two distinct types). As a result, the passages in which Hegel takes up and redevelops these terms must be considered first, in order to bring out the internal connections and reticular structure mentioned above. This examination will reveal that Hegel outlines the characteristics of a mystical approach which is intrinsically linked to speculation and to a certain type of enthusiasm. This mystical approach emerges, moreover, through a distinction between different understandings of ecstasy, but also through a distinction between mystery and secret, and between “the mystery” and “mysteries”. The complexity of the resulting framework will allow us to establish the philosophical significance of this different typology of mysticism, and by extension to detect a series of essential expressions of it in the history of philosophy, up to the most outstanding case: Jakob Böhme.

3.1 *The Mystery and the Secret*

We can begin our reconstruction of the relationship between mysticism and speculation by approaching an exemplary passage of the lecture course in *History of Philosophy* that Hegel gave in the academic year of 1825–1826. The passage reads as follows: “the Neoplatonists have called ‘mystical’ the speculative concept; *μυεῖν*, *μυεῖσθαι*, ‘to be initiated’ means ‘to engage in speculative philosophy’. The superficial meaning is that this is something unknown. But ‘Mysterium’ is nothing truly unknown, inconceivable”.¹⁹⁴ Here too, the Neoplatonists feature as an important

¹⁹⁴V 6, 261: “Die Neuplatoniker haben ‘mystisch’ den spekulativen Begriff genannt; *μυεῖν*, *μυεῖσθαι* ‘eingeweiht werden’ heißt, ‘sich mit der spekulativen Philosophie beschäftigen’. Die oberflächliche Bedeutung ist die, daß es etwas Unbekanntes sei. Aber ‘Mysterium’ ist gar nichts wahrhaft Unbekanntes, Unbegreifliches”. In the case of the passage under consideration here it is crucial to use this particular edition, which seeks to reconstruct a single cycle of lectures, attempting to remain as faithful to the original content as possible. In Michelet's edition the text has a different and more confused form in which the term *mystisch*, which is precisely the pivot of the whole argument, does not appear at all. *Werke* 13, 96 (cf. TWA 18, 100): “Bei den Neuplatonikern heißt *μυεῖν*, *μυεῖσθαι* (eingeweiht werden), sich mit spekulativen Begriffen beschäftigen. Unter

point of reference: their use of the adjective “mystical” (*mystisch*) provides Hegel with the opportunity to develop a series of reflections on the notion of mysticism starting from its etymological root. For the Neoplatonists, Hegel first argues, the mystical is the speculative concept, no less. The analysis that follows, however, is both a clarification and a broader elaboration of this view and in this context the reference to the etymology of the adjective *mystisch* is extremely important.

The Greek verb *myein*, from the etymological root *myo*, means literally “to close”. Often, it is used in the sense of “closing one’s eyes”, “to not see what is secret”, and “closing one’s mouth”, to silence, “to not reveal anything”.¹⁹⁵ The adjective *mystikos* refers then to a secret matter, something that the eyes cannot bear to see and of which the mouth must not speak. But it is clear that Hegel does not follow this etymological line. In fact, his emphasis on the kinship between *mystical* and *speculative* is oriented in quite the opposite direction. By focusing on identifying the two terms with each other Hegel seeks to ‘direct’ the reader (or rather, the lecture audience) toward a very particular understanding of the term *mystisch*. To this end, he constructs an *ad hoc* etymology that differs entirely from the real etymology of the term but allows him to demonstrate the non-correspondence between the original meaning of the word and its current usage. Hegel maintains that the Greek verb *myein*, as it is interpreted by the Neoplatonists, means “to be initiated”.¹⁹⁶ Initiation into the mysteries is of course a secret practice, the meaning of which is understood and shared only by members of a certain group, and in this sense the first part of the etymology provided by Hegel remains connected to the root of the verb *myein*.¹⁹⁷ The expression that follows, while appearing to be a reiteration of what came before, represents in fact a very important addition that casts a new light on the entire argument: initiation into the mysteries refers to nothing other than the most significant philosophical activity, namely that of “pursuing speculative philosophy”. This apparently simple coupling of two synonymous expressions (“to be initiated” and “pursuing speculative philosophy”) is in fact the result of a leap between two completely different levels of analysis – from the secrecy of the mysteries to the (by no means secret) speculative activity of the philosopher. Hegel contrasts this understanding of mysticism as speculative endeavor to the more “superficial meaning” which conceives of the secrecy of the mystical as something unknown. The real etymology of the term, which refers precisely to this idea of incommunicable secrecy, is thus interpreted by Hegel as a trace of the least important semantic content of the word. In contrast, the conceptual depth of the adjective *mystisch* is expressed through a bold pairing which cannot be derived etymologically.

Mysterien versteht man, oberflächlich genommen, das Geheimnißvolle, was so bleibt, nicht bekannt wird. In den eleusinischen Mysterien war aber nichts Unbekanntes”.

¹⁹⁵ See the work of Baldini (1990), 23, who relies heavily on Ancilli’s *La mistica: alla ricerca di una definizione* (Ancilli (1984), vol. 1, 17–40).

¹⁹⁶ See Kluge (1989), *sub voce*: *Mysterium*: “Geheimnis, Unerklärliches, *sondersprachl.* Im 16 Jh. entlehnt aus gleichbedeutend 1. *mysterium*, dieses aus gr. *mysterion* (dass.), zu gr. *mystes m.* ‘ein in die eleusinischen Geheimnissen (= *Mysterien*) Eingeweihter’, zu gr. *myein* ‘sich schließen.’”

¹⁹⁷ See for example Schwenck (1827), 473.

Hegel's allusion to the common usage of the word is probably a reference to contemporary debates (such as those concerning the boundary separating mysticism from science) in which the term *mystical* was used to talk about unknown, perhaps even unknowable, phenomena that could not be explained scientifically or rationally. For Hegel, this was an improper use of the term *mystisch*, whose Greek roots (in particular as they are interpreted by the Neoplatonists) reveal that the *mystical* is in fact neither unknowable nor mysterious. On the contrary, *mystisch* refers explicitly to the speculative concept, and thus mysticism must be understood as an approach to knowledge, a way of "pursuing speculative philosophy". Referring to the Neoplatonists and to an unusual etymology of the term in question, Hegel challenges the foundations of the ordinary usage of the adjective *mystisch* and so opens the way to a radically different interpretation.

A new element is introduced at the end of the passage: *Mysterium*, a term which Hegel seems to link directly to the word *mystisch* (indeed they derive from the same root, the abovementioned verb *myein*).¹⁹⁸ *Mysterium*, Hegel insists, is not to be understood as something mysterious and unknowable, for it actually expresses a mystical – that is to say speculative – depth. It is important to note that Hegel explicitly uses the term in the singular: *Mysterium*, not *Mysterien*. The mystery contains, mystically, a speculative fullness which should not remain closed (*myo*) and secretive, but should instead be opened up and understood.

The passage continues with a series of reflections on the theme of mystery and the mysteries. Hegel argues that the mysteries (*Mysterien*) of Christianity are not the expression of that which is unknown but the expression of the knowledge of the nature of God. While Christian dogmatics prefer in such a context to use the plural *mysteries*, Hegel concentrates on the singular, *Mysterium*, adding that "here *Mysterium* is not at all something secret".¹⁹⁹ The mystico-speculative content of the mystery should be recognized as such: it must cease to be (and, more importantly, to be regarded as) a secret. In this way, Hegel attempts to distinguish the secret (*Geheimnis*) from the mystery (*Mysterium*), terms which are too often confused and mistakenly viewed as synonyms.²⁰⁰ The mystery is not a secret, for it contains a profound knowledge of speculative nature that must be revealed and brought out into the open.²⁰¹ Thus, though the mystery may initially appear to be a secret, once the mystico-speculative depth has been acknowledged, the aura of secrecy dissipates and the secret is apprehended at last for what it truly is: *Mysterium*, the mystical expression of the pure concept – just as the Neoplatonists had argued.²⁰² Hegel

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ V 6, 261: "'Mysterium' ist hier gar nichts Geheimes".

²⁰⁰ See for example Weigand (1860), 225, where the antiquated entry *Mysterium*, no longer in use and therefore marked with a †, is translated using the modern term *Geheimniß*. The two words are considered to be perfectly synonymous. Even in the more recent *Biblisch-historisches Handwörterbuch* edited by Reicke and Rost (1962) *Mysterium* and *Geheimnis* are considered to be synonymous entries (see *sub voce*).

²⁰¹ On the link between *Mysterium* and *speculation* see Menegoni (2004), 238–239.

²⁰² See also Hegel's critique of the use of the term *Mysterium* in Schelling's *Über die Gottheiten von Samothrace* (see V 4a, 146 and V 4b, 688).

is able to say “‘secret’ is then the speculative”,²⁰³ that is to say: if the secret is ‘opened’, in ceasing to be a secret it becomes a comprehensible and highly meaningful mystery whose speculative core, while previously ‘enclosed’ within, can finally surface. The difference between secret and mystery emerges precisely at the limit between the unreachability of the esoteric and the possibility of understanding that which is – or aspires to become – exoteric.

Of course, the form through which the mystery expresses the speculative content is still not the most appropriate. Only the form of the concept can fully express that which the mystery continues in part to conceal. As we have seen, the problem of the form through which the concept is communicated is by no means secondary for Hegel. Even his reflections on the difference between the mystery and the secret must be considered from this angle, as Hegel repeatedly reminds us in these lectures.²⁰⁴ Ultimately, that which is enclosed in the heart of the *Mysterium* must be transformed, translated, in conceptual terms.

Already in the *Phenomenology*, in the section on *Artistic Religion*, Hegel makes several important observations in relation to the meaning of *Mysterium*. These pages focus on the role of the “cult”: Hegel reflects on the oriental cult of the luminous essence (a reference to the Zoroastrian religion), on the Bacchic cult, and ultimately anticipates the distinction between such cults and the Christian rite of consecration. He outlines a kind of evolution in which the golden thread is the progressive opening up of the mystery, until it reaches the highest level in which the speculative content manifests itself in all its complexity, namely the “*Mysterium* of the flesh and the blood”. Even more important than the characteristics of and differences between the cults he mentions (a topic which cannot be addressed in detail here) is Hegel’s way of describing the progressive revelation of the mystery. This is the same process that was delineated in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* through the difference between the mystery and the secret. The process, Hegel writes, consists in the slow emergence of conscience out of a state of “nocturnal concealment”.²⁰⁵ This nocturnal metaphor²⁰⁶ suggests a condition in which everything is indistinct and from which the content, initially shrouded in darkness, emerges and takes shape. The passage from the oriental cult to the Bacchic rite represents a first step toward the dissolution of this nocturnal condition, gaining consciousness of the speculative meaning of the rite. Indeed, we read: “In this enjoyment, therefore it is given away what that rising luminous essence is; it [*the enjoyment*] is the mystery of it. Indeed the mystical is not

²⁰³ V 6, 261: “‘Geheimnis’ ist dann das Spekulative”.

²⁰⁴ See for example, *ibid.*, 262: “Das Mysterium nun, das Spekulative geht uns in der Art und Weise, wie es in einer Religion enthalten ist, nichts an, sondern insofern es in die Form des Gedankens herausgesetzt ist.”

²⁰⁵ *Werke* 2, 543 (cf. TWA 3, 527): “nächtlichen Verborgenheit”.

²⁰⁶ Of course the term *Nacht* can only remind us of the famous passage in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* in which Hegel criticizes the philosophy (or rather the philosophies, as I have shown) of immediacy, comparing it to the “night in which all cows are black” (*Werke* 3, 14; cf. TWA 3, 22). While the passage in which the discussion of nocturnal secrecy occurs is not at all critical, the problem of immediacy nonetheless remains central: see for example *Werke* 2, 530 (cf. TWA 3, 515), in which the transformation of this night, straining toward the revelation of that which is still concealed within, is defined as a liberation from its own *immediate* existence.

concealment of a secret or ignorance, but rather it consists of this: that the Self knows itself to be one with the essence, and the latter is therefore revealed".²⁰⁷ As we have seen, Hegel considers the luminous essence as characteristic of the oriental cult; the enjoyment (*Genuss*), that is to say the consumption of the bread and the wine, represents instead the rite of Ceres and Bacchus (it has not yet taken the form of the Christian mystery of the consecration). The mystery consists here in the emergence of that which in the oriental cult was not yet consciously conceived: the mystical content manifests itself through the opening up of the mystery, through its progressive revelation. A powerful tension toward its own manifestation lies within the mystery, a tension understood as a drawing closer to consciousness, in opposition to ignorance, where the secret remains closed.²⁰⁸ In the formless and undifferentiated night that Hegel associates with the oriental cult of the luminous essence,²⁰⁹ an element of consciousness is introduced: when the self grasps its oneness with the essence, the secret gives way to the mystical mystery and to its revelation.

Hegel, however, goes on to state that true self-consciousness comes only with the *Mysterium* of the flesh and the blood, that is to say only with the supreme sacrifice in which spirit itself is sacrificed at the altar. Alluding to the Gospels, he writes that the formless darkness of the night is then "betrayed", that is to say disturbed, shaken from within, and set in motion.²¹⁰ The betrayal is the introduction of a self-conscious subjectivity that emerges at the moment of the sacrifice. This problem can be examined further by considering a manuscript compiled by Hegel during the Berlin period for his lectures in *Philosophy of Religion*. Although the two texts – the reflections on the notion of the cult in the *Phenomenology* and these Berlin notes – were written at different times, their juxtaposition reveals how Hegel's thought evolves on the basis of the same terminology, especially with regard to the connection between *Mysterium* and speculation. In the brief notes, written in Hegel's own hand, we read: "God is *Spirit* – i.e. what we call the triune God; pure SPECULATIVE content, i.e. MYSTERIUM of God – God is Spirit – the *absolute activity actus purus* – i.e. *subjectivity* – infinite *personality* – infinite – differentiation of it from itself – generation".²¹¹ The content of the divine mystery is defined as pure specula-

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 542 (cf. TWA 3, 526): "In diesem Genusse ist also jenes aufgehende Lichtwesen verrathen, was es ist; er ist das Mysterium desselben. Denn das Mystische ist nicht Verborgenheit eines Geheimnisses oder Unwissenheit, sondern besteht darin, daß das Selbst sich mit dem Wesen Eins weiß und dieses also geoffenbart ist."

²⁰⁸ See ibid., 537 (cf. TWA 3, 522): "Dieser Kultus ist nur erst *ein geheimes*".

²⁰⁹ Faint glimmer and absolute darkness are equivalent here: already in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* the "formless white" and the "night in which all cows are black" express the same idea of immediate indeterminacy.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 530 (cf. TWA 3, 514): "Diese Form ist die Nacht, worin die Substanz verrathen ward und sich zum Subjekte machte; aus dieser Nacht der reinen Gewißheit seiner selbst ist es, daß der sitliche Geist als die von der Natur und seinem unmittelbaren Daseyn befreite Gestalt aufersteht." The reference here is, of course, to the betrayal of Judas (see Matthew 26).

²¹¹ GW 17, 221–222: "Gott ist *Geist*, – d. i. das, was wir *dreyeinigen* Gott heißen; Rein SPECULATIVER Inhalt, d. i. MYSTERIUM Gottes – Gott ist Geist – die *absolute Thätigkeit actus purus* – d. i. *Subjectivität* – unendliche *Persönlichkeit* – unendliche – Unterscheidung *seiner von sich selbst* – Erzeugung".

tion: the noun *Mysterium* and the adjective *spekulativ* are once again approached as mutually dependent. The speculative aspect consists in conceiving God as spirit, “what we call the triune God”. God’s triplicity represents the key element in Hegel’s discussion, and enables the meaning of the term “speculation” to come into focus. The mystery is speculative insofar as it reveals the Divine in motion: indeed, the holy Trinity is an image of God in the moment of its internal separating, in the midst of its generative act, that is to say in the moment in which the movement which gives rise to subjectivity begins and the Son emerges and distinguishes himself from the Father. The introduction of subjectivity, through the figure of the Son, is of course the defining feature of this approach in contrast with the oriental mysteries described in the *Phenomenology*, the religion of Zoroaster and the Greek Bacchae. Essential to this distinction is the fact that the opening up of the mystery exposes a speculative core. Following a common etymological and semantic pairing in Hegel’s time, speculation is understood here in relation to the classical meaning of the Latin term *speculum*²¹² which, through the metaphor of the mirror, refers to the doubling of the object through its image. In this sense, God’s division is considered a speculative moment. The metaphor of the mirror also points to another important element which Hegel raises in these notes, namely the modality of divine speculation, in which plurality (the three Persons of the Trinity) and unity, separation and cohesion, cannot be thought of as independent but remain as inseparable as the reflected object and the image that appears on the surface of the mirror. The identity and the division

²¹² As Holz has noted (2005), 227–229, the etymological relationship between *speculum* and *speculatio* has not in reality been proven. Nonetheless, this parallel between mirror and speculation has enjoyed such popularity that it has overshadowed the true etymology of the term *speculatio*. In fact, in medieval Latin the *speculum* corresponds to a small watchtower and the *speculator* is the one who has control over a given territory (frequently used to refer to the bishop). *Speculari* has the original meaning of “looking about”, and not of “reflecting on the surface of a mirror”. In medieval mysticism the term *speculatio* is frequently used as a synonym of *contemplatio* and refers to the *visio dei*; already in this context the image of the mirror is at play. The *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Ritter and Gründer (1971–2007), vol. 9, 170, *sub voce* *Spekulation*) traces this shift in meaning – from *speculum* as a small tower to *speculum* as mirror – to Augustine: “*Speculantes dixit, per speculum videntes, non de specula prospicientes*” (Augustine, *De trinitate* XV, 8, 14). On this topic, see also Inwood (1992), *sub voce*: “*Speculatio* was used by Boethius for the Greek *theōria* (‘contemplation’). Augustine, the scholastics (e.g. Aquinas) and the mystics (e.g. Seuse, Nicholas of Cusa) associate it with the *speculum*, and, following St. Paul (1. Cor. 13: 12), argue that God cannot be seen or known directly, but only in his works or effects, as in a mirror. Thus speculation goes beyond Sensory Experience to the divine or supernatural.” In addition, see Kluge (1989), *sub voce* *Spekulieren*: “Im Mittelhochdeutschen entlehnt aus 1. *speculāri* ‘ins Auge fassen, sich nach etwas umsehen, spähen’, zu 1. *spectare* ‘schauen, anschauen, ansehen’, einem Frequentativum zu 1. *specere* (*spectum*) ‘sehen’”. One must, of course, refer also to DW, where the entry *spekulieren* reads: “SPEKULIEREN, verb., aus lat. *speculari* wie spekulation [...] von den mystikern zur bezeichnung für das bis zur verzückung sich steigernde versenken in religiöse betrachtung entlehnt.” DW considers the use of the term *Spekulation* in mystical context to be its original meaning: “SPEKULATION, f., aus lat. *speculatio*. ursprünglich in der sprache der mystiker die bis zur verzückung sich steigernde betrachtung des verhältnisses von gott zu den menschen, deren resultate als offenbarungen der göttlichen wahrheit angesehen wurden, eine bedeutung, die sich schon bei BOETIUS de consolatione philosophiae 4, 1. 5, 2 für unser wort anbahnt” (see DW, *sub voce*).

between the two facets of speculation are, in other words, a systole and a diastole that make it possible to think of God in motion.²¹³ Thus the opening up of the Christian *Mysterium* reveals an internal speculative content in the sense that it shows a mobile God in the perpetual act of differentiation, a movement that was foreign to the undifferentiated night mentioned above.

For Hegel the image of the generation of the Son from the Father is a “speculative representation”,²¹⁴ as if to say that the principle of speculation, which founds the conception of the Divine as spirit, is expressed in the language of mystery through sensory representations. These representations must therefore be identified and developed conceptually in order to understand the role and importance of the speculative process which the relationship between Father and Son represents. Hegel argues that speculation’s delicate equilibrium, and above all its particular way of conceiving opposition, namely as a specific phase in a twofold movement of both separation and unification, can only be understood by reason, thus avoiding the rigid oppositions produced by the intellect. Indeed, in the Berlin manuscript, Hegel goes on to declare that within God, as spirit, the contradictions are perpetually posed and eternally resolved, expunged and overcome (*aufgehoben*). The contradiction integral to the speculative process is thus conceived as mobile, active and elastic, so to speak. It is neither rigid nor static.²¹⁵ The continual and vital movement of speculation can be grasped only by reason (*Vernunft*) and not by the intellect (*Verstand*).²¹⁶ Reason is capable of understanding the mystery that is condemned to remain a secret for the intellect.²¹⁷ For the purposes of our investigation into the relationship between mysticism and speculation, it is worth drawing attention to the close connection here between rationality and speculation.²¹⁸ This connection becomes even

²¹³ On this topic, see Hodgson (1993), in particular 481.

²¹⁴ See GW 17, 223.

²¹⁵ See *ibid.*: “*Bey diesen Bestimmungen – reinen spekulativen Denkbestimmungen muß es gelassen werden – oder für den Glauben diß Aufnehmen nach den gegebenen naiven glücklichen Formen der Vorstellung, Sohn, Erzeugen. Nämlich wenn [sich] an diese speculativen Vorstellungen DER VERSTAND macht, seine Formen hineinbringt, sind sie sogleich verkehrt – und wenn er Lust hat, braucht er gar nicht aufzuhören, Widersprüche aufzuzeigen – Es sind Widersprüche aber sie sind ebenso aufgelöst; – die Widersprüche aufzuzeigen, dazu hat er das Recht durch die Unterschiede und die Reflexion derselben in sich – aber Gott, der Geist ist es eben selbst, der diesen Widerspruch ewig macht [und] aufhebt – Er hat nicht auf diesen Verstand gewartet – der den Widerspruch, und diese Bestimmungen, die den Widerspruch enthalten, wegbringen will, – er ist eben diß, sie selbst wegzubringen.*”

²¹⁶ The issue of the difference in competence between the intellect and reason in Hegel’s work has, of course, been at the heart of numerous critical studies. I refer to them here without entering into the details of what remains a very complex discussion. On the rigidity of *Verstand* and on how it differs from the labor, the work of reason (“Arbeit der Vernunft”) see for example Nuzzo (2006). For a clear definition of the terms involved (*Verstand*, *Vernunft*, *Reflexion*) see Inwood (1992), *sub voce*.

²¹⁷ See Desmond (2003), 103–104.

²¹⁸ On the parallel between intellect and reflection (*Reflexion*) on the one hand, and reason and speculation on the other, see Baum (1986), 77: “die Bezeichnung der Tätigkeit des Verstandes als

more fundamental once the traces of a surprising and unexpected association – that of *mystisch* and *spekulativ* – are discovered within Hegel's writings.²¹⁹

Paragraph 82 of the *Encyclopedia*, and above all its complementary *Zusatz*, provide an occasion for investigating in greater detail the way in which mysticism, speculation and rationality are interlinked. In the opening lines of this paragraph which aims to provide a definition of the speculative, Hegel writes: “The *speculative* or *positive-rational* grasps the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the *affirmative* which is contained in their dissolution and their passing over.”²²⁰ Read in the light of what has just been said concerning the speculative content of the mystery, this passage reveals the importance of the equivalence between the speculative and the positively rational. Equally revealing is the discussion that follows, in which Hegel explains the modalities through which the speculative-rational element conceives and elaborates the relationship between unity and opposition. Indeed, speculation grasps determinations in their irresistible pulling toward scission and opposition but also in their very unity. We are reminded here of the divine movement discussed in the aforementioned Berlin notes, and of the possibility of understanding speculation as the motor of the Trinity, as the eternal mirroring of the Father in the Son and of the Son in the Father.

In order to locate and determine precisely the philosophical meaning of the term “speculation”, and to dispel its common connotations, Hegel performs the same operation that had allowed him in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* to distinguish the superficial modern meaning of the term “ecstasy” from a deeper meaning derived from Neoplatonic philosophy. First, he states, speculation is not “merely something subjective”,²²¹ in spite of what the ordinary expressions in which it occurs

‘Reflexion’ und der reinen theoretischen Vernunftkenntnis als ‘Spekulation’ stimmt zunächst mit dem Kantischen (und Fichteschen) Sprachgebrauch überein.”

²¹⁹ I disagree here with Holz (2005), 232 who, in spite of offering an accurate account of the conception of *speculation* from the perspective of its etymological roots, nonetheless concludes by declaring that Hegel, “contrary to the mystics”, keeps speculation separate from the immediacy and irrationality of the *visio dei*. Holz’s view is based on a certain preconception with respect to the notion of *mysticism* – a preconception which Hegel himself, in my view, was attempting to abolish. Irrationality, immediacy and mysticism are not necessarily inseparable: not only is speculative mysticism not irrational, but – as we will see – it is also based on a wise and careful use of *mediation*.

²²⁰ *Werke* 6, 157 (cf. TWA 8, 176): “Das *Spekulative* oder *Positiv-Vernünftige* faßt die Einheit der Bestimmungen in ihrer Entgegensetzung auf, das *Affirmative*, das in ihrer Auflösung und ihrem Uebergehen enthalten ist.”

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 158 (cf. TWA 8, 177–178): “Weiter ist nun das *Spekulative* überhaupt nichts Anderes als das *Vernünftige* (und zwar das *Positiv-Vernünftige*), insofern dasselbe *gedacht* wird. Im gemeinen Leben pflegt der Ausdruck *Spekulation* in einem sehr vagen und zugleich untergeordneten Sinn gebraucht zu werden, so z. B., wenn von Heirats- oder Handelsspekulationen die Rede ist, worunter dann nur so viel verstanden wird, einerseits, daß über das unmittelbar Vorhandene hinausgegangen werden soll, und andererseits, daß dasjenige, was den Inhalt solcher Spekulationen bildet, zunächst nur ein Subjektives ist, jedoch nicht ein solches bleiben, sondern realisiert oder in Objektivität übersetzt werden soll. Es gilt von diesem gemeinen Sprachgebrauch hinsichtlich der Spekulationen dasselbe, was früher von der Idee bemerkt wurde, woran sich dann noch die weitere Bemerkung schließt, daß vielfältig von Solchen, die sich schon zu den Gebildeten rechnen, von der Spekulation auch ausdrücklich in der Bedeutung eines *blos* Subjektiven gesprochen wird, in der Art nämlich, daß es heißt, eine gewisse Auffassung natürlicher oder geistiger Zustände und Verhältnisse möge

appear to imply.²²² Not only does the everyday meaning of the term diverge significantly from the original sense of the word, it actually contributes to its obfuscation. To understand what speculation is and how it acts, its original meaning must be rediscovered. This meaning is directly linked to the etymology of the term *mystisch* with which we began: the mystical and the speculative are connected, and even used as synonyms, because they express the same movement.²²³ Indeed the *Zusatz* to Paragraph 82 reads as follows:

As to the meaning of the speculative, it should still be mentioned here that we should understand it as the same as what in former times, especially in relation to the religious consciousness and its content, used to be called the *mystical*. When nowadays the mystical is spoken of, it is generally considered to be synonymous with the mysterious and incomprehensible. According to the difference of individual education and attitude, one person will then regard this mysterious and incomprehensible as that which is actual and true, another as superstition and deceit. With regard to this it should be noted first of all that the mystical is indeed something mysterious, but only for the intellect, and simply for this reason: that the abstract identity is the principle of the intellect, but the mystical (as synonymous with the speculative) is the concrete unity of those determinations which for the intellect count as true only in their separation and opposition.²²⁴

This passage contains *in nuce* all the key themes examined so far, bringing into focus the bond that connects mysticism and speculation. On the basis of this passage it is possible to summarize the various stages of the trajectory investigated until now, and shed light on its guiding principles.

As with the term *Ekstase*, Hegel works his way backward through history in search of the original, deep meaning of the term speculation; this ‘ancient’ meaning is considered paramount to the formulation of the concept of speculation and in this sense he regards it as far more relevant than the modern understanding of the term in which speculation is envisaged as a private and subjective matter. The opposition between two temporal levels – “in former times” (*früher*) and “nowadays” (*heutzutage*) – is crucial here. Hegel’s criticism of mysticism as alienation, as a leap into

zwar, blos spekulativ genommen, sehr schön und richtig seyn, allein die Erfahrung stimme damit nicht überein, und in der Wirklichkeit könne dergleichen nicht zugelassen werden.”

²²² On this topic, see the *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch* by Basler, Schultz and Strauß (1995–), in particular the entry for *Fabel*, a term which in its meaning of *falsehood*, as an account that contradicts historical facts, or in the sense of a “subjective error of evaluation” (*Täuschung*), is also connected to *Fiktion*, *Legende*, *Mythos*, *Phantasie*, *Spekulation* (see vol. 5, 608).

²²³ On this topic cf. TWA 19, 594, where the terms *mystisch*, *spekulativ* and *intellektuell* are used synonymously.

²²⁴ *Werke* 2, 159–160 (cf. TWA 8, 178–179): “Hinsichtlich der Bedeutung des Spekultativen ist hier noch zu erwähnen, daß man darunter dasselbe zu verstehen hat, was früher, zumal in Beziehung auf das religiöse Bewußtseyn und dessen Inhalt, als das *Mystische* bezeichnet zu werden pflegte. Wenn heut zu Tage vom Mystischen die Rede ist, so gilt dieß in der Regel als gleichbedeutend mit dem Geheimnißvollen und Unbegreiflichen, und dieß Geheimnisvolle und Unbegreifliche wird dann, je nach Verschiedenheit der sonstigen Bildung und Sinnesweise, von den Einen als das Eigentliche und Wahrhafte, von den Andern aber als das dem Aberglauben und der Täuschung Angehörige betrachtet. Hierüber ist zunächst zu bemerken, daß das Mystische allerdings ein Geheimnißvolles ist, jedoch nur für den Verstand, und zwar einfach um deswillen, weil die abstrakte Identität das Princip des Verstandes, das Mystische aber (als gleichbedeutend mit dem Spekultativen) die konkrete Einheit derjenigen Bestimmungen ist, welche dem Verstand nur in ihrer Trennung und Entgegensetzung für wahr gelten.”

ecstatic immediacy and into the intoxicating euphoria of feeling, was aimed exclusively at his Romantic and Schellingian contemporaries. In contrast to this trend, Hegel embarks on a journey of rediscovery in search of the true meaning of these terms. Over the course of this journey, the etymological roots of the term *mysticism* encounter the original meaning of the term *speculation*, both long forgotten and confined to the past. It becomes clear, at this point, why Hegel only ever uses the term *mysticism* in a generic, non-specific sense when referring to the pseudo-mystical, or mysticizing, attitude described above.

The true meaning of mysticism is inseparably bound up with speculation. But “when nowadays the mystical is spoken of”, we fail to appreciate the semantic origin of the term and confuse the mystical with the secret and the incomprehensible – we forget, in other words, the difference between the mystery (*Mysterium*) and the secret (*Geheimnis*). The split between two different interpretive approaches to the meaning of the *mystical* element – both contemporary and both founded on a misunderstanding of the terms in question – is precisely a reflection of the historical context described in the first part of the present study. Not only was Hegel acutely conscious of contemporary uses of the term and of the semantic changes it underwent in the cultural context of the nineteenth century: he also actively intervened in this context, albeit in a rather peculiar way. Indeed, he openly declared himself to be working outside the continuing debate which was founded, in his view, upon an erroneous understanding of the term *mystisch*. Both the ‘enthusiasts’ (such as Tieck) who saw the mystical element as the one and only truth, and the skeptics (such as Fichte) who rejected *all* mysticism as superstition, based their opinions on the most superficial meaning of the term *mystical*, not on its original, conceptually rich and philosophically relevant meaning. By returning to the etymological roots of the term and by bringing them to interact with the concept of speculation, Hegel endowed one of the most popular terms of early nineteenth-century discourse with an entirely new structure. Indeed, he proposed a completely different way of understanding mysticism.

He goes on to state, in line with the Berlin notes for the *Religionsphilosophie*, that the mystical element is indeed mysterious, but only from the point of view of the intellect, which is not able to grasp the complexity and richness of the mystic-speculative movement. If the intellect can only understand abstract identity, reason on the other hand can penetrate the concrete unity produced by mystical speculation – a unity that is both vital and mobile, constantly passing into opposition. The keystone of his argument is the dynamism of scission: the intellect tends to suspend all oppositions and therefore, inevitably, suspend all movement; in contrast, for Hegel, reason is capable of understanding separation in its dialectical interdependency with unity, which is also to say that it is capable of understanding separation in its mystical, or speculative, movement.

This idea of movement was already fundamental to Hegel’s definition of the “mystical object” and “mystical action” in *The Spirit of Christianity*, in which he used the word *mystisch* to describe the complex movement – made up of an outward journey and a return – of the Divine through an object, in this case the bread and wine handled by Christ during the Last Supper. Already in that early text, mystical action is envisaged as a moment of transition, capable of transforming the fixity of

an object into a channel through which the Divine may express and manifest itself. Moreover, when Hegel described the intrinsically mobile nature of the mystical element, he distinguished clearly between the simplicity of the symbolic action accomplished by John the Baptist (an action capable of stimulating a simple feeling of cohesion with the whole in the person immersed in the baptismal water) and the complex instability of the mystical action and its aporias. The parallel between mysticism and speculation which Hegel elaborates in his later writings is based on the same decisive trait – mobility – that he attributed to the action of Christ and to the object upon which it was exercised. The mystical movement described in *The Spirit of Christianity* was also understood as a twofold passage: a passage into opposition and difference (God's passage through a limited body that is incapable of containing him completely), as well as the dissolution of this opposition in a return to a limitless state in which power and the immensity of the divine no longer allow themselves to be grasped in any objective form. God's self-manifestation was said to take place precisely through the equilibrium between these two phases and the movement generated by their contradiction – hence the discussion surrounding Christ's gesture and its elaboration into a codified ritual.

Already in the Frankfurt years, Hegel had underlined the importance of distinguishing a secret practice from a mystical practice. Indeed, for Hegel, the latter remained incomprehensible only to those who do not grasp the meaning and procedures of the rite. As we have seen, Hegel turns to the theme of the comprehensibility of the mystical moment once more, in the *Zusatz* to paragraph 82 of the *Encyclopedia*: here he argues that it should not be regarded as something secret but rather as the apex of rationality, as the speculative movement that only reason can truly grasp. Indeed, the *Zusatz* continues:

If then those who recognize the mystical to be what is true also leave it at this, that the speculative be something plainly mysterious, then for their part they only declare with this that for them, too, thought has only the meaning of the abstract positing of identity and that therefore thought should be renounced in order to attain truth, or, as people also like to say, that reason must be imprisoned. But now, as we have seen, abstract intellectual thought is hardly something firm and final, it proves far more to be the constant sublation of itself and the reverting to its opposite. On the contrary, the rational consists precisely in containing the opposites in itself as ideal moments. Therefore, all that which is rational has to be defined at the same time as mystical, yet what is said by this is merely that it goes beyond the intellect and not in the least that it should be considered as impenetrable for thought and inconceivable.²²⁵

²²⁵ *Werke* 6, 160 (cf. TWA 8, 179): "Wenn dann diejenigen, welche das Mystische als das Wahrhafte anerkennen, es gleichfalls dabei bewenden lassen, daß dasselbe ein schlechthin Geheimnißvolles sey, so wird damit ihrerseits nur ausgesprochen, daß das Denken für sie gleichfalls nur die Bedeutung des abstrakten Identischsetzens hat, und daß man um deswillen, um zur Wahrheit zu gelangen, auf das Denken verzichten, oder, wie auch gesagt zu werden pflegt, daß man die Vernunft gefangennehmen müsse. Nun aber ist, wie wir gesehen haben, das abstrakt verständige Denken so wenig ein Festes und Letztes, daß dasselbe sich vielmehr als das beständige Aufheben seiner selbst und als das Umschlagen in sein Entgegengesetztes erweist, wohingegen das Vernünftige als solches gerade darin besteht, die Entgegengesetzten als ideelle Momente in sich zu enthalten. Alles Vernünftige ist somit zugleich als mystisch zu bezeichnen, womit jedoch nur so viel gesagt ist, daß dasselbe über den Verstand hinausgeht, und keineswegs, daß dasselbe überhaupt als dem Denken unzugänglich und unbegreiflich zu betrachten sey."

Of the two opposing tendencies of his contemporaries, it is the positive one, so to speak, that Hegel considers here. For defenders of this approach, mysticism was not merely a form of superstition, but the expression of “that which is true”. The Romantics would be counted among these, alongside those students of animal magnetism for whom the apex of magnetic treatment was reached in the mystical condition of the somnambulist, where “mystical” refers to the incomprehensible and therefore secret nature of the clairvoyant. In this sense, mysticism remains impenetrable to thought. But mysticism understood as speculation – counters Hegel – is not in the least resistant to thought, even if the intellect, that is unable to reach the speculative heights of reason, cannot gain access to it. Hegel, rather radically, affirms in the *Zusatz*: “All that which is rational has to be defined at the same time as mystical”. This type of mysticism expresses, therefore, a pressure toward the surpassing of the limits of the intellect, reaching to a higher level, in which thought becomes properly rational, and the reflection of unity-in-difference (of God in the Son) becomes a speculative movement. It is, without doubt, a path to knowledge.²²⁶

Hegel's distinction between two contrasting understandings of the term “mysticism” – between a modern, aconceptual and immobile mysticism, and an older, speculative and rational mysticism which expresses an internal movement – is the key point.²²⁷ Thanks to this distinction, it is possible to contextualize Hegel's criticism of a certain form of mysticism and his great interest in authors who, in his view, express themselves philosophically in the language of speculative mysticism. In the latter case, the decisive feature is the movement of thought. In what follows I will attempt to show how this definition of mysticism as speculation finds its application in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. In particular, I will examine Hegel's reinterpretation of the term *Schwärmerei*. Not only does this reinterpretation confirm the originality of Hegel's position, it also provides an important link with *The Spirit of Christianity* and with his definition of Christ as an enthusiast capable of acting mystically.

3.2 *Mystical Enthusiasm and the Movement of Thought*

3.2.1 The Neoplatonists and the Mystical Scholastics

In Hegel's *History of Philosophy*, it is in relation to Neoplatonism that the equivalence of mysticism and speculation emerges for the first time. In the lectures on Proclus, we read: “‘Mystical’ properly means ‘speculative’. The mystical or speculative consists in this, that the differences, which are determined as totalities,

²²⁶ See DW, *sub voce*: *Spekulation*, where the second definition of the term reads: “beschauliche, tiefsinnige betrachtung eines gegenstandes, verhältnisses u. s. w., zum zweck, die erkenntnis desselben dadurch zu erweitern.”

²²⁷ Thanks to this distinction, we may avoid the error upon which many studies are based, in which Hegel's criticism of the mysticism of his contemporaries is interpreted as a criticism of mysticism *tout court*. In addition to the examples already cited above, see Sarlemijn (1971), 20.

divinities, are grasped as unity. In the Neoplatonists the term ‘mystical’ recurs often: *μύειν* then means nothing other than ‘speculative consideration’.²²⁸ Once again with reference to the verb *myein*, Hegel argues that to consider a philosophical problem “mystically” means nothing less than to examine it from a speculative point of view. Neoplatonic mysticism is thus an example of the type of speculation described above. In this case too, mysticism consists in a philosophical approach grounded in the dynamic of unity and difference, in which difference does not exclude unity but leads to it. The multiplicity of divinities represents this unity which scission does not negate but brings rather to expression: the relationship between unity and difference is thus a fundamental element of Neoplatonic mystical speculation.

In the lectures on Proclus, this mystical movement is subdivided into three distinct phases that Hegel describes respectively as “to remain” (*bleiben*), “to proceed” (*fortschreiten*), and “to return” (*zurückkehren*). The union of these three different moments gives life to that which Hegel, commenting on Proclus, calls a triad.²²⁹ The three phases of the triad are not, however, described as static states but rather as moments of transition in an ongoing process. In an almost kaleidoscopic manner, Hegel explains that each phase possesses its own inner triadic movement and each can therefore be considered, in turn, a tri-unity. The threefold internal movement of the phases gives rise to a complex system whose unitary character refracts itself in each partial movement. The passage in question, in the section on Proclus of the 1825–1826 lectures, reads: “All this is One Idea – this remaining, this proceeding and this folding back. Each is a totality for itself, but the last is the totality which brings everything back into itself. These three triunities announce in a mystical way the absolute cause of everything, the first substance.”²³⁰ This primal substance, this original unity, is considered mystically in the moment in which its internal vitality, that is to say its inner triadic rhythm through which unity continually reflects itself in scission, is recognized. The speculation which grounds this mystical approach should be understood, once again, as the reflection of unity in difference, where difference corresponds to a multifaceted and multiform mobility. The tight bond between mysticism and movement was already present, in embryonic form, in *The Spirit of Christianity*, where Hegel states that only “mystically speaking” can opposites – though in appearance irredeemably separate, distant and immobile – be conceived as partaking in a vital unity.²³¹ Hegel’s lectures on Proclus bear witness to

²²⁸ V 8, 190: “‘Mystisch’ | heißt im eigentlich Sinn ‘spekulativ’. Das Mystische oder Spekulative ist, daß diese Unterschiede, die als Totalitäten, als Götter bestimmt sind, als eine Einheit zu erfassen. Bei den Neuplatonikern kommt überhaupt der Ausdruck ‘mystisch’ oft vor; *μύειν* heißt dann nichts anderes als ‘spekulative Betrachtung.’” See also Menegoni’s commentary on this passage in Menegoni (2004), in particular 238–239.

²²⁹ See V 8, 188–189. Hegel uses the terms *Trias*, *Triade* and *Dreiheit*. See also GW 17, 224.

²³⁰ V 8, 189–190: “Dies alles ist Eine Idee – dieses Bleiben, dieses Fortschreiten und dieses Zurückkehren. Jedes ist Totalität für sich, aber das letzte ist die Totalität, die alles wieder in sich zurückbringt. Diese drei Dreieinigkeiten verkündigen auf eine mystische Weise die absolute Ursache von allem, die erste Substanz.”

²³¹ See above, Chap. 2, Sect. 1.3.

his attempt to elaborate a conception of mysticism whose fundamental characteristic consists in the capacity to animate a speculative movement. This type of mysticism reflects a view of substance which seeks to reveal its internal and vital relation (reminiscent of the "lebendiger Zusammenhang" of the Frankfurt text). Thus understood, mysticism is radically different from the mystical tendency repeatedly criticized by Hegel: where the latter is characterized by lifeless immobility, the former is in contrast characterized by a triadic movement that can be properly defined as speculative.

Just as "mystical speech" can be related to the act of "speaking of God in a state of inspiration [*Begeisterung*]", so too in the lecture on Proclus: *Begeisterung* is fundamental to the mystico-speculative approach and to its capacity to elaborate the triadic movement of the original unity. On Proclus' presentation of the articulation of the triads, we read: "During this process, Proclus becomes enraptured in enthusiasm".²³² In the section on Plotinus, Hegel interweaves inspiration (*Begeisterung*) and ecstasy (*Ekstase*), stating that:

Through this, one begins to set oneself up from this perspective, and to awaken this in oneself as a rapture, as Plotinus calls it, as an inspiration. The main thing becomes to elevate oneself to this representation of the pure essence; this is the simplification of the soul, through which it is placed in blessed calm, because then its object, too, is simple and calm. He calls it 'ecstasy', but it is not the ecstasy of perception, of the imagination. It is rather pure thought, which is in itself, which makes itself object.²³³

Given what has already been said with respect to the double meaning of the term *Ekstase*, Hegel's interpretation of Plotinus' inspiration as a form of ecstasy synonymous with "pure thought" comes as no surprise (in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*, ecstasy was defined as "pure concept").²³⁴ This is not – Hegel emphasizes – an ecstasy of perception or of the imagination. The content of Neoplatonic ecstasy is by no means fanciful or visionary. It does not arbitrarily create the object of its own contemplation through the imagination. On the contrary, Plotinus' ecstasy is instead a way of gaining access to the heights of thought. It is a state which represents an inspired path toward the grasping of "essential unity".²³⁵ This act of conceiving the

²³² V 8, 189: "Bei diesem Fortgang bricht Proclus in Begeisterung aus".

²³³ Ibid., 179–180: "Damit wird hier angefangen, sich auf diesen Standpunkt I zu stellen und dies in sich zu erwecken als ein Entzücken, wie es Plotin nennt, als eine Begeisterung. Zur Hauptsache wird gemacht, sich zur Vorstellung des reinen Wesens zu erheben; das ist Vereinfachung der Seele, wodurch sie in selige Ruhe versetzt wird, weil dann ihr Gegenstand auch einfach und ruhig ist. 'Ekstase' nennt er es, aber es ist nicht Ekstase der Empfindung, der Phantasie; es ist vielmehr reines Denken, das bei sich selbst ist, sich zum Gegenstand macht."

²³⁴ On this topic see Gabriel (2007), 71–72: "Hegels philosophiehistorischer Durchbruch in der Auseinandersetzung mit Plotin besteht darin, das aufklärerische Vorurteil überwunden zu haben, dass es sich bei der neoplatonischen Metaphysik grundsätzlich um 'Schwärmerei' handle, die die Grenzen des rational Ausweisbaren willkürlich überschreitet (TWA 19, 440 ff.). [...] Die Ekstasis ist in der Tat kein Indiz eines Irrationalismus, sondern Moment einer konsequenten Metaphysik, die sich als 'Denken des Einen' (Beierwaltes 1985) versteht." The article is, moreover, accompanied by a detailed bibliography on Hegel as interpreter of Plotinus.

²³⁵ See also V 8, 178: "Das Charakteristische an Plotin ist die hohe Begeisterung für die Erhebung des Geistes zum Guten und Wahren – zu dem, was an und für sich ist."

dialectical relationship between unity and difference, where unity is expressed by plurality and plurality, in turn, leads to an understanding of substance in its vitality and its mobility.²³⁶

In this regard, another passage from the 1825–1826 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* proposes a connection between the speculative mysticism of the Neoplatonists and the concept of “mystery”:

This explication of the idea is to be recognized as true in all its moments [...] [I]n more recent times there has also been much talk about this proceeding from God. From indifference difference comes forth. But ‘to proceed’ is still a sensuous expression, something immediate. It does not express the necessity of self-disclosure, of self-differentiation; it is only posited, it occurs. The Father generates the eternal Son – this is entirely sufficient for the representation, but for the concept this form of the immediacy of the movement and of the determinacy is not enough. The idea, as this triad, is thus grasped quite rightly and truthfully with regard to the content, and this must be greatly respected.²³⁷

The generative process by which the Father eternally distinguishes himself from the Son exemplifies the same movement of differentiation and return to unity that constitutes, according to Hegel, the mystico-speculative nucleus of Neoplatonic philosophy.

Once again, Hegel returns to the problem of the form in which this speculative idea – the reflection of unity in difference – comes to be expressed. Both the expression “to proceed” (*Hervorgehen*), applied to the philosophy of the Neoplatonists, and the image of the Son’s generation by the Father refer to concrete, tangible actions. They are, in other words, *representations* through which a speculative nucleus is tentatively brought to expression even if, as we have seen in the case of the *Mysterium*, the depth of the speculative can emerge fully only when it is ‘translated’ into the form of the concept. Thus, if the representations cited by Hegel provide a glimpse of the mystico-speculative content with which they are in contact, they nonetheless conceal this content under a surface of sensory images.

Despite the partial opacity of these representations, Hegel insists on the importance of recognizing the philosophical content that they express, albeit imprecisely and not conceptually. Just as the mystery needs be opened up in the light of the concept, thus ceasing to be a secret, so that which the representation reveals through

²³⁶ See *ibid.*, 180, where ecstasy is interpreted as the way to understanding unity as *source*, as *origin*: “Was nun den bestimmten Hauptgedanken Plotins betrifft, das Objektive, den Inhalt, der in dieser Ekstase, in diesem Sein des Denkens bei sich wird, so ist dieser Inhalt nach seinen Hauptmomenten im allgemeinen das, wovon schon gesprochen worden ist, nämlich: Das Erste ist die wesentliche Einheit, das Wesen als Wesen, als Erstes; nicht die Dinge als seiende, nicht die erscheinende Vielheit des Daseins ist das Prinzip, sondern vielmehr schlechterdings ihre Einheit”.

²³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 181–182: “Diese Explikation der Idee ist als wahrhaft anzuerkennen in allen ihren Momenten [...]. [I]n neuerer Zeit hat man auch von diesem Hervorgehen aus Gott oft gesprochen. Aus der Indifferenz geht Differenz hervor. ‘Hervorgehen’ ist aber immer ein sinnlicher Ausdruck, ein Unmittelbares. Die Notwendigkeit des sich Aufschließens, sich Differenzierens ist damit nicht ausgesprochen; es ist nur gesetzt, es geschieht. Der Vater erzeugt den ewigen Sohn – dies ist ganz genügend für die Vorstellung, aber für den Begriff ist diese Form der Unmittelbarkeit der Bewegung und Bestimmung nicht hinreichend. Die Idee als diese Dreiheit ist also dem Inhalt nach ganz richtig und wahr aufgefaßt, und dies ist hoch zu achten.”

sensory images needs to be recognized and elaborated in the form of the concept. From this perspective, the main contribution of Neoplatonic philosophy, which deserves to be rediscovered on a conceptual level, is that of the idea conceived as a triad (*Dreiheit*). The Neoplatonic triads express the same philosophical core as that of the Christian image of the Trinity: in both cases it is a matter of mystico-speculative movement.

Hegel argues, moreover, that this speculative differentiation of the original unity has returned to the fore in "more recent times". It is not clear to whom Hegel is referring when he uses this expression,²³⁸ but several noteworthy parallels can be observed between Hegel's interpretation of Neoplatonism and his presentation of Böhme's mysticism in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. It is not simply the recurrence of the same vocabulary in the lectures on the Neoplatonists and on Böhme which is significant here: the main point of connection lies in the premises upon which these lectures are based, namely the project of constructing a new way of understanding the articulation of mysticism and speculation. In fact, on the basis of this conception of the triad it is possible to elicit a series of other cases within Hegel's *History of Philosophy* in which mysticism is understood as speculation. Let us follow the thread provided by the terminological and conceptual constellation examined until now – in which mysticism and speculation are inseparable from the idea of movement (in particular triadic movement) and from the problem of the connection between representative expression and conceptual core. Before turning to an examination of the way in which these elements come together to form the framework of Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism, it should be noted that in the section of the *History of Philosophy* dedicated to medieval philosophy, Hegel actually traces a direct line of continuity which leads from the Neoplatonists to the "mystical Scholastics": "The older, purer mystical Scholastics have the same that we saw in Proclus; and up into later times in the Catholic church, too, when God is spoken of with mystical depth, then these are Neoplatonic representations."²³⁹ Hegel regards the medieval mystics, who include Jean Charlier de Gerson and Raimond Sebond, as forming a response to the dead ends of empty formalism to which a number of Scholastics succumbed. Hegel interprets this medieval mystical orientation, which in reality re-elaborated Neoplatonic representations, as an alternative to the rigidity of Scholasticism: here too, great importance is attributed to the movement of the mystical approach. Where Scholastics remained stuck (at least in certain cases) on the discussion of "formal relations",²⁴⁰ the mystics "kept themselves pure

²³⁸ Ibid., 454: according to Jaeschke and Garniron Hegel may well have Jakob Böhme in mind when he uses the expression "Ausfluß des göttlichen Einen", though he may also be referring to Schelling.

²³⁹ *Werke* 15, 93 (cf. TWA 19, 486–487): "Die älteren, reineren, mystischen Scholastiker haben dasselbe, was wir bei Proklos sahen; und bis auf die späteren Zeiten auch in der katholischen Kirche, wenn mystisch tief von Gott gesprochen wird, so sind dieß neuplatonische Vorstellungen." The section devoted to the medieval mystics is considerably shorter in the lecture course of 1825–1826 (see V 9, 45).

²⁴⁰ See V 9, 42.

with regard to philosophical reflection (*philosophische Betrachtung*).²⁴¹ Thus, mysticism, philosophy and the movement of thought are, once again, inseparably linked. In their opposition to Scholastic formalism, the medieval mystics are represented by Hegel as those who preserved the purity of the philosophical impulse. Michelet's edition of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* contains an additional phrase with respect to the lectures of 1825–1826: “with them we find true philosophizing, which is also called mysticism”.²⁴²

The pertinence of Hegel's appraisal of medieval mysticism to the present discussion becomes particularly evident if considered alongside other very popular contemporary treatments of the matter, such as the *History of Philosophy* compiled by Tennemann or the *Manual of the History of Philosophy* written by Rixner as a guide to his lectures. Indeed, these texts were important points of reference for Hegel's own *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.²⁴³ A number of elements found in Rixner's text are also used by Hegel in his brief presentation of medieval mysticism, first and foremost the idea that mysticism represented an alternative to the aridity of Scholasticism.²⁴⁴ Rixner, like Hegel, expresses his appreciation of medieval mysticism and of its ability to escape the superficiality of Scholastic disputes, promoting instead the “highest profundity” of thought.²⁴⁵ At first sight, given that this estimation is also present in Hegel's work, we might assume that the latter borrowed from Rixner the central idea on which he grounds his short section on medieval mystics. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that Hegel and Rixner are not in agreement over the meaning of the term mysticism: indeed Hegel makes careful use of Rixner's *Manual*, choosing to insert the argument on the importance of medieval mysticism into a thoroughly new interpretive framework.

Rixner interprets the opposition between mysticism and Scholasticism through a series of head-on conflicts: interiority versus exteriority, depth versus surface, the silence of tranquillity versus the clamor and confusion of dispute, and finally, feeling versus intellect.²⁴⁶ Writing against the Scholastics, whom he characterizes as “pugnacious and quarrelsome”, Rixner presents the mystics as those who, having

²⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 45.

²⁴² *Werke* 15, 195 (cf. TWA 19, 584): “Bei solchen [*the mystical scholastics*] findet man ächtes Philosophieren, was man auch Mystizismus nennt”.

²⁴³ See for example V 6, 362–363.

²⁴⁴ See V 9, 228.

²⁴⁵ Rixner (1829), vol. 2, 4, where Rixner defines the approach of the medieval mystics as “höchste[r] Tiefsinn”.

²⁴⁶ See for example *ibid.*, 173: “Da nun der Gegensatz zwischen Mystik und Schulwissenschaft, wie zwischen Innerm und Aeusserm, Gefühl und Verstand, gläubigen Ahnen oder begrifflosen Schauen und begreifenden Wissen, ein ewiger und immerwährender ist: so kommt dann auch die *Mystik* nicht nur als *Gegnerin der Scholastik* des eigentlichen Mittelalters, sondern überhaupt als *Gegnerin der einseitigen gemüthlosen Speculation* zu betrachten.” With respect to the opposition between mysticism and scholasticism, Rixner repeatedly cites Jean Charlier de Gerson. Indeed, the latter makes a clear distinction between “mystische Theologie” and “Schul-Theologie”, stating for example: “dass sie [*mystical theology*] in ihrer Art vollkommen seyn kann, auch ohne die Scholastik, dagegen diese nimmermehr ohne jene” (see *ibid.*, 189).

abandoned the approach of the intellect, devote themselves in silence and through the enthusiasm of feeling to the search for God.²⁴⁷ The discrepancy between Rixner and Hegel on this point is clear. For Hegel, mysticism – in the proper sense of the term – has nothing to do with the renunciation of the intellectual faculties, but represents rather an attempt to elevate oneself to the speculative heights of reason. Indeed, Hegel does not highlight the problem of union with the Divine, nor does he dwell on the idea of calm or on the sentimental approach of the mystics. Instead, he emphasizes the value of mysticism as an antidote to the ossification of thought, as a philosophical vitality that is opposed to the arid immobility of Scholastic disputes. Hegel's frame of reference is thus of a completely different nature.

Rixner's reference to enthusiasm allows us to trace an additional contrast, this time with the interpretation of Tennemann. For Tennemann, the mystical approach is the antithesis of philosophical reflection. He considers it utterly incompatible with the methods of philosophy. For example, Tennemann states that Gerson held "mystical theology", based on an inner experience of contemplation, to be the "true philosophy". Tennemann's tone here is highly critical – even if he adds that Gerson did not succumb to the temptations of empty enthusiasm.²⁴⁸ At first sight, Tennemann's approach, in his *History of Philosophy*, to the relationship between medieval mysticism and Scholasticism appears to be analogous to Hegel's own approach: indeed, Hegel relied a great deal on Tennemann's text to prepare his own lectures. The information Hegel provides on medieval mystics in particular seems to derive directly from Tennemann's writings;²⁴⁹ and yet, there is no trace of Tennemann's disapproval of medieval mysticism in Hegel's lectures. Tennemann does not consider medieval mysticism to be an antidote to the rigidity of Scholastic thought at all. Rather, this mysticism represents for him the definitive and total corruption of medieval thought. Faced with the vacuity of Scholastic disputes – writes Tennemann – there was nothing left to do but "throw oneself into the arms of mysticism". In this way, though the necessities of the intellect were definitively abandoned, at least feelings were reawakened and hearts rewarmed.²⁵⁰ The mystical

²⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, 173: "Denn während die kühnen kampflustigen *Scholastiker* esführte Schuldigkeit hielten, durch die Waffen der Vernunft den Glauben der allgemeinen christlichen Kirche gegen den Unglauben und Irrglauben, wo möglich, auf der ganzen Erde siegen zu machen; waren die *Mystiker* einzig und allein oder doch vorzüglich mit der eigenen Heiligung in der Stille des beschaulichen Lebens beschäftigt, und suchten auch Andere zu dieser seligen Ruhe in Gott durch Beispiele, und die Mittheilung ihrer eigenen begeisternden Gefühle zu gewinnen."

²⁴⁸ See Tennemann (1829), 294: "[*Gerson*] welcher auf das thätige Christenthum drang [...] und die mystische Theologie, in so fern sie sich auf innere Anschauung gründet [...] für wahre Philosophie hielt. Der leeren Schwärmerei aber stellt sich *Gerson* durch seine eigenthümliche Bearbeitung der Logik entgegen". See also Tennemann (1798–1819), vol. 8, section 2, 955–986.

²⁴⁹ See V 9, 227.

²⁵⁰ Tennemann (1798–1819), vol. 8, section 2, 954: "*Scholastik* und *Mystik*, diese zwei Extreme, hatten sich schon oft während des Mittelalters berührt. Jene suchte durch Begriffe das Wesen der Dinge und ihre Verhältnisse zu einander zu bestimmen, und ihr Hauptziel war die Erkenntniß Gottes und seines Verhältnisses zur Welt. Diese Begriffe waren aber durch fortgesetzte Bearbeitung so abgezogen, so dünn und inhaltsleer worden, die Spekulationen gaben dem menschlichen Herzen zu wenig Nahrung, und verwirrten endlich beides, Verstand und Herz, daß diejenigen Denker,

approach is presented by Tennemann as a pure, aconceptual sentimentality; the ultimate rung in the descent into the corruption of philosophical reasoning. Hegel, however, has no trace of this opposition between mysticism and philosophy, instead presenting mysticism as the custodian of the original vitality of philosophy.

Tennemann's criticism of mysticism revolves around one key term: *Schwärmerei*. From the Neoplatonists to the medieval mystics and up to Böhme, Tennemann constructs a line of thinkers who belong, so to speak, to a different path to that of the history of philosophy. According to Tennemann, these thinkers substitute a philosophically pointless mystical enthusiasm for the proper understanding of philosophical problems. Tennemann's criticism exposes the originality of Hegel's own approach to the meaning of the term *Schwärmerei* and to the problem of its inclusion within the realm of philosophy. It also reveals the novelty of Hegel's evaluation of the contribution of enthusiasm to the construction of a new and different conception of the relationship between mysticism and speculation. Thus, it is worth considering the differences between Hegel and Tennemann in detail, starting with their respective approaches to the Neoplatonists and to the medieval mystics. The key example over which Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and Tennemann's *History of Philosophy* irreparably diverge is the case of the mystical cobbler Jakob Böhme.

3.2.2 The Dispute over the Notion of Mystical Enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*)

We have already seen that Tennemann criticizes medieval mysticism in general and Gerson in particular. It is no coincidence that in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (*Compendium of the History of Philosophy*) he expresses a similar judgment with regard to the Neoplatonists. On Plotinian ecstasy for example, which Hegel saw as a genuine elevation to the heights of speculation, Tennemann writes: "His [Plotinus's] lively spirit, which was often enraptured in ecstasy, prevented him from systematically developing his mysticism."²⁵¹ While the term "mystical rationalism" may suggest that Tennemann was open to a conception of mysticism that went beyond its specular opposition to rationality, it is equally clear that the vitality of ecstasy represents a mere obstacle for Tennemann, a barrier on the path of philosophical reflection. As for *Schwärmerei*, the particular type of enthusiasm often associated to the concept of ecstasy, Tennemann firmly asserts that this consists of a process through which philosophy decays. In this context, the *Schwärmerei* of the Neoplatonists, along with the importance they attached to the contemplation

welche nicht ohne Herz waren, und außer dem Speculiren noch ein höheres Interesse für den unsterblichen Geist erkannten, sich der Mystik in die Arme warfen, welche, *wenn sie auch nicht den Verstand erleuchtete, doch das Herz erwärmte*, und durch Gefühle das Ewige zu erfassen, festzuhalten, und den Menschen mit Gott in Verbindung zu setzen versprach" (my italics).

²⁵¹ Tennemann (1829), 212–213: "Sein [Plotinus's] lebhafter Geist, der sich oft in Ekstasen befand, hinderte ihn, seinen mystischen Rationalismus systematisch durchzuführen."

(*Anschauung*) of, and fusion with, the Absolute,²⁵² ushered in a phase of corruption of Platonic philosophy.²⁵³ The fact that Tennemann uses the word *schwärmerisch* as a synonym for *supernaturalistisch* in the pages of the *History of Philosophy* devoted to the Neoplatonists is significant.²⁵⁴ In so doing he suggests that the contemplative attitude of the Neoplatonists posits knowledge of the Absolute firmly outside the confines of reason (*Vernunft*).²⁵⁵ For Tennemann, the Neoplatonic enthusiasts consciously renounce rational reasoning – a shift in the direction of the supernatural which he interprets as a misrepresentation of Plato's philosophy.

For Hegel, as Halfwassen has noted, the Neoplatonic reinterpretation of Plato's doctrine remains instead in harmony with the latter's original teachings.²⁵⁶ In order to understand how Hegel reaches such a conclusion, so different from Tennemann's, it is crucial to consider how Hegel defines the term *Schwärmerei*. A first clue can be found in the lectures on Plotinus, where we read: "The general reputation of this philosophy is that it is excessive enthusiasm. It is common to hear it being called excessive enthusiasm, in open contrast with the fact that he [Plotinus] places every truth only in reason and in conceiving."²⁵⁷ Having established that *Schwärmerei* is ordinarily understood to be the opposite of rational, conceptual, reasoning, Hegel presents his own, provisional (as we will see) definition of the term: "Excessive enthusiasm posits truth in a being which stands between reality and the concept, which is neither reality, nor is it conceived – a being of the imagination. But Plotinus is very far from this."²⁵⁸ According to this formulation, enthusiasm, in the sense of *Schwärmerei*, is closely linked to the imagination since it remains suspended between reality and the concept toward which it tends, but which it nonetheless fails

²⁵² On *Anschauung* as the preferred Neoplatonic approach to knowledge see *ibid.*, 211.

²⁵³ On this topic see Tennemann's emphasis on the process of 'orientalization' of Platonic philosophy implemented by the Neoplatonists, which he sees as an additional element in the context of the enthusiastic decadence discussed above (see *ibid.*, 210. See also Halfwassen (1999), 161).

²⁵⁴ Tennemann (1798–1819), vol. 6, 15.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 et seq., in particular 17: "[diese Philosophie war so leicht] weil sie das Denken in ein Anschauen, die Anstrengung der Vernunft in ein Spiel der Phantasie verwandelte, die Fordeungen an systematische Einheit und Vollständigkeit, Bündigkeit und Konsequenz erließ. [...] Die Philosophie wurde in eine Art von Dichtung verwandelt".

²⁵⁶ See Halfwassen (1999), 161. For a detailed contextualisation of Hegel's readings of Plato see: Santi (2000).

²⁵⁷ *Werke* 15, 42 (cf. TWA 19, 440): "Der allgemeine Ruf über diese Philosophie ist, daß sie Schwärmerei sey. Es ist gewöhnlich, sie eine Schwärmerei nennen zu hören, womit es zugleich sehr kontrastiert, daß ihm alle Wahrheit allein in der Vernunft und in dem Begreifen ist." The long discussion of the concept of *Schwärmerei* to which I refer here is absent in V 6–9. Given that a similar argument can be also gleaned from the lectures dedicated to Böhme, I believe that the text contained in Michelet is of crucial importance. The fact that the same understanding of the term *Schwärmerei* recurs elsewhere in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (also in passages of the course of 1825–1826) seems to corroborate and verify Michelet's report.

²⁵⁸ *Werke* 15, 42 (cf. TWA 19, 440): "Die Schwärmerei setzt die Wahrheit in ein Wesen, das zwischen der Wirklichkeit und dem Begriffe steht, das nicht Wirklichkeit ist, noch auch begriffen, – ein Wesen der Einbildung. Hiervon aber ist Plotin weit entfernt."

to grasp. With this definition, Hegel is able to conclude that the word *Schwärmerei* should not, strictly speaking, be applied to the case of Plotinus, whose philosophy – as we have seen – is *ecstatic* in the specific sense that it rises above the intellect to reach the level of reason. Hegel refuses then to consider Neoplatonism as a highly fanciful philosophy founded on the excesses of enthusiastic imagination, as Tennemann would have it.

The text continues with an important clarification concerning the ordinary use of the term *Schwärmerei*: “But what earned him this reputation is partly the fact that the description of fanatical enthusiasm is often given to everything that goes beyond sense-consciousness or beyond the determinate concepts of the intellect, which in their limitation are counted as beings”.²⁵⁹ What appears at first sight to be a simple supplementary comment in fact changes the sense of the entire argument. Hegel states that Neoplatonic philosophy can *only* be defined as a form of *Schwärmerei* if the term is understood to mean the act of overcoming the limits of sensory perception or of the concepts of the intellect. *Schwärmerei* is thus interpreted in a completely different manner. This enthusiastic propulsion toward transcending the limitations of the intellect fits into the context outlined above, and from which emerges Hegel’s complete reinterpretation of the conception of ecstasy, according to which ecstasy is a possible path to knowledge and not a mere excess of the imagination. Plotinus can be called a *Schwärmer* precisely because he attempts, according to Hegel, to rise up to the heights of reason, venturing beyond the limitations of the intellect. After this rather surprising remark, Hegel goes on to state that the Neoplatonists have to a certain extent deserved the title of enthusiasts, thanks to an ‘expressive defect’: when they speak of concepts, the Neoplatonists often adopt a figurative language grounded in sensory representations (*Vorstellungen*).²⁶⁰

On the one hand, Hegel’s redefinition of *Schwärmerei* contributes to his sharp criticism of positions such as Tennemann’s: enthusiasm (like ecstasy, and more generally like mysticism, both understood in their original meaning) is not alien to rational argument.²⁶¹ On the other hand it highlights the problem of expression, that is to say, of the relationship between form and its content. The enthusiasm that Hegel recognizes in Neoplatonic philosophy thus becomes a crucial element within the framework outlined above: this type of enthusiasm, which expresses a desire to overcome the limitations of the intellect, produces a genuine “movement of thought”.²⁶² This emphasis on the dynamic capacity and vitality of enthusiasm is the crucial point. Again, in the lectures on Plotinus we read:

²⁵⁹ Ibid. (cf. TWA 19, 440–441): “Aber was ihn in diesen Geruch gebracht hat, ist Theils dieß, daß häufig alles dasjenige Schwärmerei genannt wird, was über das sinnliche Bewußtseyn oder über die bestimmten Verstandesbegriffe, die in ihrer Beschränktheit für Wesen gelten, hinausgeht”.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 42–43.

²⁶¹ In this respect, it should be noted, the common opinion according to which Hegel made a clear distinction between the imaginative excesses of enthusiasm and the rigor of rational reasoning appears limited (see, for example, Inwood (1992), 273).

²⁶² Even in the case of Giordano Bruno, enthusiastic vitality is not, in Hegel’s view, an obstacle to the development of thought but one of its most essential characteristics (see for example V 9, 52).

Certainly anybody who considers as fanaticism every elevation of the spirit to the supra-sensory, every faith of man in virtue, in what is noble, divine, eternal, every religious conviction, may also include the Neoplatonists in this [definition]. But certainly this is here merely an empty name, which can occur only in the speech of the bare intellect and of the lack of faith in everything which is higher. But if we call fanaticism every elevation to speculative truths which contradict the categories of the finite intellect, then the Alexandrines are guilty of it too, but then Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy will equally correctly be called fanatical enthusiasm. Indeed Plotinus speaks of the elevation of the spirit to thought with inspiration; or rather this is in fact the proper and Platonic inspiration, that is, to elevate oneself to the sphere of the movement of thought.²⁶³

Just as he does for the terms mysticism, speculation and ecstasy, Hegel constructs a constellation of alternative meanings to attribute to the word in question – *Schwärmerei*. In his view, those who accuse the Neoplatonists of excessive enthusiasm are using the term *enthusiasm* improperly, turning it ultimately into an empty name, which refers to nothing at all. Hegel does not, however, conclude that enthusiasm has thereby exhausted its task: he does not propose that the word be abandoned in favor of a more appropriate term. Indeed, in his discussion of the meaning of Plotinian enthusiasm, Hegel refers to Plato and to the role played by enthusiasm in his thought.²⁶⁴ In the *Encyclopedia* Hegel alluded to the Platonic interpretation of enthusiasm, criticizing the way in which some of his contemporaries based their own theories on erroneous interpretations of Plato.²⁶⁵ In contrast, the Neoplatonists understand enthusiasm in the proper, Platonic, sense.

By grounding his redefinition of enthusiasm with reference to Plato, Hegel not only distances himself from Tennemann but also from another particularly authoritative interpretation, namely Kant's criticism of *Schwärmerei* articulated in a short text entitled *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie*

²⁶³ *Werke* 15, 43–44 (cf. TWA 19, 442): “Wer freilich jede Erhebung des Geistes zum Unsinnlichen, jeden Glauben des Menschen an Tugend, Edles, Göttliches, Ewiges, alle religiöse Ueberzeugung Schwärmerei nennt, der wird auch die Neuplatoniker hierher rechnen dürfen; freilich aber ist es da nur ein leerer Name, der nur im Munde des kahlen Verstandes und des Unglaubens an alles Höhere vorkommen kann. Nennen wir aber die Erhebung zu spekulativen Wahrheiten, welche den Kategorien des endlichen Verstandes widersprechen, Schwärmereien, nun dann haben sich auch die Alexandriner derselben schuldig gemacht; aber mit demselben Recht wird auch die platonische und aristotelische Philosophie Schwärmerei seyn. Denn Plotin spricht allerdings von der Erhebung des Geistes in das Denken mit Begeisterung; oder vielmehrieß ist die eigentliche und platonische Begeisterung, sich zu erheben in die Sphäre der Bewegung des Gedankens.”

²⁶⁴ In the last lines of this quotation, Hegel abandons the term *Schwärmerei* in favor of the term *Begeisterung*. This may be the result of an attempt to free himself of the everyday meaning, of this “empty name”, implicit in the word *Schwärmerei*. The meaning of the passage, however, appears consistent and homogeneous, and it seems unlikely in this case that Hegel meant to give primacy to the second term over the first: the heart of the problem remains the question of the philosophical meaning of enthusiasm, irrespective here of terminology.

²⁶⁵ See above, Chap. 1, Sect. 3.1.2. That Hegel's terminology does not always appear to be rigorous with respect to the meaning of enthusiasm is confirmed by the fact that the preferred term in the passage from the *Encyclopedia* is *Enthusiasmus*. On the distinction between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* see, however, Vieweg (1999), 85, where it is noted that Hegel defends Ficino's *Schwärmerei* in the so-called *Skeptizismus-Aufsatz*.

(*On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy*).²⁶⁶ According to Kant, Plato was, despite himself, the “father of every *Schwärmerei* in philosophy”. He clarifies in the same pages what he means by *Schwärmerei*: “the mystical illumination”, to which the *Schwärmer* entrust themselves, represents “the death of all philosophy”.²⁶⁷ The Neoplatonists – and here Kant is in agreement with Tennemann – have corrupted Plato’s philosophy, depriving it of concepts and reducing it to a subjective, purely sentimental approach: Kant describes enthusiastic mysticism, such as that typical of Neoplatonism, as a fatal leap beyond the concept, a leap into the dark and secret territory of the unthinkable (*Undenkbar*).²⁶⁸ From a Kantian perspective, concept and mystical enthusiasm are thus extremes that cannot be reconciled.²⁶⁹ According to Hegel, however, enthusiasm consists not only in an “elevation of the spirit to the supra-sensory” – as we read in the opening lines of the passage quoted above – but also, and above all (as he states in the conclusion) in an elevation to the realm of the movement of thought. In this way, Hegel links the characteristic of movement to a particular form of enthusiasm that he traces back to Plato. Movement is the decisive factor that allows for the definition of Neoplatonic enthusiasm as a philosophical path: Hegel relies on this notion of mobility to distinguish between two different types of ecstasy, and even more fundamentally, between two distinct forms of mysticism. On the accusation of *Schwärmerei* and *Ekstase* made against Plotinus, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* it is stated:

For those who call him such [*a fanatic*] have nothing else in mind than a condition into which sink the crazy Indians, Brahmins, monks and nuns, who try to eliminate in themselves all representations and images of a reality in order to bring about a pure retreat into themselves. Thus this would be partly a changeless condition, but in this fixed looking into the void, whether it appears as clarity or as darkness, there would be no difference, no thought at all.²⁷⁰

Once again, the problem is one of terminology. Those who hold Plotinus to be an enthusiast and his thought to be the result of ecstatic contemplation, use both

²⁶⁶ Kant (1911–1922), vol. 6 (*Schriften von 1790–1796*), 477–496.

²⁶⁷ See *ibid.*, 486–487.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 486 and 488. See also Ritter and Gründer (1971–2007), *sub voce* *Mystik* (vol. 6, 268 et seq.): “Kant spricht kritisch von M. [...] als einem ‘Übersprung’ (salto mortale) von Begriffen zum Undenkbaren [...]. Sie ist ‘Schwärmerei’, ‘vernunfttödtend’ und ‘schweift ins Überschwengliche hinaus’. Dies entspricht einem im späten 18. und 19. Jh. einsetzenden breiten Sprachgebrauch, in dem ‘Mystizismus’ als Schwärmerei und Gefühlsreligion abqualifiziert wird”.

²⁶⁹ In the lectures on the *History of Philosophy* dedicated to Kant, Hegel refers to the Kantian critique with respect to mysticism and *Schwärmerei* (see *Werke* 15, 551–552 (cf. TWA 20, 330): “Gott ist bei Kant α) in der Erfahrung nicht zu finden: weder in der äußeren, wie Lalande sagte, er habe am ganzen Himmel gesucht, und ihn nicht gefunden; noch in der inneren, – die Mystiker, Schwärmer können allerhand in sich erfahren und ebenso Gott, d. i. das Unendliche, erfahren”).

²⁷⁰ *Werke* 15, 45 (cf. TWA 19, 443): “Denn es fällt dann denen, die ihn so nennen, nichts Anderes ein, als ein Zustand, in den sich die verrückten Indier, Brahminen, Mönche und Nonnen versetzten, die, zum reinen Zurückziehen in sich selbst sich zu bringen, alle Vorstellungen und Sehen einer Wirklichkeit in sich zu tilgen suchen; so daß dieß Theils ein beständiger Zustand sei, Theils aber in diesem festen Schauen in das Leere, es erscheine nun als Helle oder als Finsterniß, keine Bewegung, kein Unterschied, überhaupt kein Denken sey.”

concepts – enthusiasm and ecstasy – inappropriately, given that they consider the behavior of Brahmins and monks to be typical examples of this ecstatic/enthusiastic approach, while Hegel does not hesitate to define such behavior as pure insanity. Hegel goes on to explain the nature of the ecstatic attitude that he so derides: it is characterized by a “static” act of looking into a vacuum, the result of which is either absolute clarity or total darkness (reminiscent of the “formless white”, as immobile as the famous “night in which all cows are black” in the *Phenomenology*). This type of ecstasy aspires explicitly to motionlessness. It leads to an absence of internal distinctions, and – the sequence of Hegel’s reasoning is noteworthy – to an absence of thought. In other words, and using a vocabulary to which I have already referred, this type of ecstasy is immediate (*unmittelbar*) and because of its leap beyond the *horos* it also becomes contentless, immobile and deprived of speculative depth. Plotinus’s enthusiastic ecstasy cannot, however, be assimilated to this ecstatic drift into a vacuum devoid of philosophical depth. It should, in fact, be distinguished from it: “But that of which he becomes conscious in this ecstasy are philosophical thoughts, speculative concepts and ideas.”²⁷¹

To summarize: for Hegel, enthusiasm can exist as a philosophical approach only if it is characterized by an internal movement which results from its confrontation with difference. Only such an internal differentiation can ensure the vitality of thought. To further explore this relationship between enthusiasm and movement of thought, let us now consider the particular case of Jakob Böhme. The dispute between Hegel and Tennemann around the opposition between – or the possible assimilation of – enthusiasm and philosophy continues in the section of their respective histories of philosophy in which the two authors turn to this rather remarkable enthusiast.²⁷²

3.2.3 The Case of Jakob Böhme

The chapter dedicated to Böhme in Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* opens with some important remarks on the recent rediscovery of his philosophy in Germany, often interpreted as a form of *Schwärmerei*. In the lectures of 1825–1826 we read: “His manner was long forgotten; he was called an enthusiast, and only recently has he been appreciated again, but on the other hand he has also been honored too much”.²⁷³ Such is Hegel’s interpretation of the reception of Böhme’s

²⁷¹ Ibid. (cf. TWA 19, 443): “Aber das, dessen er in dieser Ekstase bewußt wird, sind philosophische Gedanken, spekulative Begriffe und Ideen.”

²⁷² To conclude this section, I would like to point out that Herbart accused Hegel himself of endorsing a position which he defined as “idealistische Schwärmerei” (Herbart (1887–1912), vol. 8, § 322, 227 et seq., also quoted in Koslowski (2001), 1, 241).

²⁷³ V 9, 78–79: “Seine [Böhme’s] Manier ist lange vergessen gewesen; man hat ihn einen Schwärmer genannt, und erst in neuerer Zeit ist er wieder zu Ehren gekommen, aber man hat ihm auch auf der anderen Seite zuviel Ehre widerfahren lassen”. See also *Werke* 15, 297: “Es ist gewiß, daß er jene Verachtung nicht verdient, aber auch anderer Seits nicht die hohen Ehren, in die er hat erhoben werden sollen.” Cf. *History of Phil.*, 93.

writings between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the conflict between supporters and opponents of Böhme's "manner" begins to develop. The last section of this reconstruction consists of a comparison between Hegel and Tennemann regarding the philosophical value of Böhme's *Theosophia Revelata*: indeed, Tennemann is one of those who called Böhme an enthusiast. As for Hegel's criticism of those who were all too quick to honor Böhme, it may well have been directed at Saint-Martin, and probably also at Baader.²⁷⁴ Hegel attacks a very particular type of "honor" paid to Böhme: as we have seen, Saint-Martin (and Baader at least in part) reads the writings of Böhme through the filter of pietism and theosophy.²⁷⁵ Thus, Hegel's presentation of Böhme's philosophy begins, significantly, with reference to the contemporary reception of the latter's writings. In fact, as Hegel himself seems to suggest at the beginning of these lectures, *only if* it is viewed within this historical setting can the originality of Hegel's own interpretation emerge. Before introducing his audience to his presentation of Böhme's philosophy, Hegel defines the context in which this presentation must be considered.

To begin with, Hegel notes a clear split between those who have avoided any sort of involvement with the writings of Böhme, judging them to be the result of enthusiasm and not of philosophical reflection (Tennemann),²⁷⁶ and those who have instead praised Böhme to the point of excess (Saint-Martin, for example). According to Hegel, the latter in fact make the same mistake as the former, since their adoration of Böhme (envisaged as a spiritual *Meister*) hinders the development of a philosophical approach to his writings. Both parties show a misunderstanding, centered around the meaning of the word *Schwärmer*.

The manuscript of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* compiled by Hotho and transcribed from the course given in the winter semester of 1823–1824 allows a closer examination of Hegel's position with respect to the recent rediscovery of Böhme's writings. The text reads: "He was denounced as a complete fantasist, a pietistic enthusiast; during the Enlightenment he was entirely forgotten."²⁷⁷ The expression "pietistic enthusiast" is particularly interesting given the context of the early German reception of the writings of Böhme, and the diffusion of his thought

²⁷⁴ See V 9, 273.

²⁷⁵ Abraham von Franckenberg, in his *Bericht* on the life of Böhme, defines theosophy as follows: "nach der wahren verborgenen Weisheit (welche man sonst *Kabbalam*, *Magiam*, *Chymiam*, oder auch in ihrem rechtem Verstande *Theosophiam* nennet)" (BS, vol. 10, 15). Theosophy is understood as a "hidden knowledge", *cabala*, *magic*, *alchemy*: the reception of Böhman mysticism in the nineteenth century reveals how interwoven and mutually dependent these terms were at the time, hence the understanding of *theosophy* as magical science, positioned halfway between theology and *Naturphilosophie*.

²⁷⁶ According to Jaeschke and Garniron, this may also be a reference to the positions of Enlightenment thinkers (see V 9, 273). On this topic, see also the following footnote.

²⁷⁷ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 132v: "Er [Böhme] ist als 1 [=ein] wahrer Phantast, als pietistischer Schwärmer verschrien, in der Zeit der Aufklärung ganz vergessen." This *Nachschrift* offers many important insights into the depth and evolution of Hegel's reading of Böhme. In the third chapter of the present work several key passages from this as yet unpublished text will be examined. A transcript of the pages dedicated to Böhme is provided in the appendix.

within pietist circles. Not only does Hegel demonstrate his awareness of this phase in the rediscovery of Böhme, he also assumes a critical position with respect to those who dismissed Böhme as a visionary, a fanatic. Only more recently, after the Enlightenment years during which Böhme was “entirely forgotten”, can a revival of interest in his philosophy be said to have taken place: “Only more recently was attention again directed to him, recognizing his depth.”²⁷⁸ Hegel may well be alluding to Baader here, whom he praises in the *Encyclopedia* for having rediscovered Böhme’s philosophy with “profoundly speculative spirit”, but perhaps he is even referring to his own interpretative attempt. Indeed, the notion of depth (*Tiefe*) is pivotal to Hegel’s rediscovery of Böhme’s philosophy. Hegel insists on the need to reevaluate the profundity of Böhme’s thought in several texts that will be discussed in the third chapter of the present study. The main purpose of Hegel’s lectures on Böhme, as I will show, is in fact to provide an alternative way, indeed a *philosophical* way, of reading *Theosophia Revelata*, in order to highlight its speculative depth.

Returning for the time being to the problem of *Schwärmerei*, let us consider the following note, taken from the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*:

To label him a fanatic does not mean anything. Indeed if one wants to, one can call every philosopher a fanatic, even Epicurus and Bacon, since they themselves held the opinion that man has his truth in something other than eating and drinking, and the prudent daily life of lumberjacking, tailoring, trading or other activities and profession.²⁷⁹

The argument is very similar to the one Hegel develops concerning the enthusiasm of Plotinus, although this time his criticism of the superficiality of ordinary uses of the term *Schwärmerei* is expressed in a more concise manner. Hegel argues that *every* philosopher can in fact be called a *Schwärmer* given that philosophy is by definition an attempt to rise above the basic sensory level of life, of eating and drinking. Philosophy’s aspiration to a higher level can be defined as an *enthusiastic* aspiration – as long as one agrees on the meaning of the word.

Tennemann’s interpretation emerges as a necessary point of comparison in order to understand Hegel’s remark. In his *History of Philosophy*, Tennemann argues that *Schwärmerei* and *Theosophie* are closely related, indeed almost synonymous, terms: in both cases the approach is anti-philosophical, starting with the Neoplatonic misinterpretation of the writings of Plato, and right up to the “theosophical dreams of Jakob Böhme.”²⁸⁰ It is worth noting that Tennemann regards Böhme as a theosopher, and that the same description is used by those whom Hegel accuses of honoring Böhme beyond measure: the two opposing interpretations agree on one important point, while expressing conflicting views about it.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., fol. 132v: “Die neuere Zeit erst ward wie der aufmerksam gemacht, seine Tiefe anerkennend.”

²⁷⁹ *Werke* 15, 297 (cf. TWA 20, 91): “Ihn als Schwärmer zu qualificiren, heißt weiter nichts. Denn wenn man will, kann man jeden Philosophen so qualificiren, selbst den Epikur und Baco; denn sie selbst haben dafür gehalten, daß der Mensch noch in etwas Anderem seine Wahrheit habe, als im Essen und Trinken, und in dem verständigen täglichen Leben des Holzhackens, Schneiderns, Handelns, oder sonstiger Stands- und Amtsgeschäfte.” This passage is absent from V 9.

²⁸⁰ Tennemann (1798–1819), vol. 10, 183.

Tennemann writes: "Every form of enthusiasm stands as such in contrast to philosophy, because it is poetic fiction, and despises reason as a source of knowledge".²⁸¹ The clearest example of this contempt for the faculty of reason is Böhme, who constructs his writings on the basis of sensory representations, imaginary similes devoid of any scientific value.²⁸² One has the distinct impression that the progressive decline of philosophy that is said to begin with the Neoplatonists reaches its lowest limit in Böhme's dreams and delusions (*Täuschungen*).²⁸³ In this sense, the image-laden chaos that Tennemann discerns in the writings of Böhme is defined as the primary characteristic of his *Schwärmerei*.²⁸⁴

Hegel's response to Tennemann's attack on Neoplatonic philosophy and its use of imagery leads to the problem of the relationship between content and expressive form in Böhme's *Theosophia Revelata*. If Tennemann considers the Neoplatonists to be bad interpreters of Plato, Hegel in contrast associates Böhme with Plato on the level of their modes of expression: "Plato speaks through myths with the intention of presenting a philosophical idea; others, too, have spoken through myths, and it is in this way that Jakob Böhme expresses what is purely speculative in genuinely Christian religious forms."²⁸⁵ Both seek to communicate a philosophical idea, that which is "purely speculative", through a figurative language which is defined here as mythological. This is not, Hegel hastens to add, a form suited to the expression of such a conceptual content.²⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Hegel implies that beneath this

²⁸¹ Ibid., 188: "Ueberhaupt ist jede Schwärmerei der Philosophie entgegengesetzt, weil sie Dichtung ist, und die Vernunft als Erkenntnißquelle verschmäheth". Tennemann goes on to add (ibid.): "Auch Böhme war überzeugt, daß die menschliche Vernunft nichts für sich vermöge im Erkennen und Wollen, daß alle Wahrheit nur durch den heiligen Geist erkannt werde, und alle Philosophie nur in der göttlichen Erleuchtung durch den heiligen Geist bestehe."

²⁸² See ibid., 192–193.

²⁸³ See for example ibid., 190.

²⁸⁴ Tiedemann's discussion of *Schwärmerei* (Tiedemann (1791–1797), vol. 5, 527) appears perfectly congruent with Tennemann's own position. According to Tiedemann both Plotinus and Böhme are *Schwärmer*, where *Schwärmerei* is described as a "fiery imagination" that rejects all rational thought. See for example ibid., vol. 3, 270, on the enthusiasm of Plotinus; and ibid. vol. 5, 527 on Böhman enthusiasm: "Seine [Böhme's] Sprache, und seine Lehre verräth ihn unwidersprechlich, und zeigt ihn als einen durch chemische und Platonisch-mystische Bücher gebildet Mann; zugleich als einen Mann, bey dem mehr das Toben der überspannenden Phantasie, als das ruhige Wirken der Vernunft, Gedanken erzeugte." Tiedemann's interpretation represents a further argument in favor of the originality of Hegel's position, which distinguishes itself significantly from the limited conception of enthusiasm which Tennemann also shares. Finally, it should be noted that Hegel explicitly praises the text of Tiedemann for one important reason, namely because it contains extensive extracts from works of medieval mystics, texts that were otherwise unobtainable: see *Werke* 15, 131 (cf. TWA 18, 134). On Tiedemann as interpreter of Plotinus, with particular attention to the problem of *Schwärmerei* see Vieweg (1999), 157.

²⁸⁵ V 6, 262: "Plato spricht mythisch, in der Absicht, eine philosophische Idee anzugeben; auch andere haben mythisch gesprochen, und ebenso drückt Jakob Böhme das Reinspekulative in lauter christlich religiösen Formen aus."

²⁸⁶ See ibid.; it is for this reason that Hegel criticizes those who consider myths to be the most important element of Platonic thought.

unsuitable and somewhat naive²⁸⁷ expressive form lies a discernibly speculative, philosophical core.

In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel places Böhme, along with Bacon, on the threshold of modern philosophy, which properly begins only with Descartes. This combination of the German cobbler and the “English lord” reveals very clearly the distance that separates Tennemann’s criticism from Hegel’s interpretation. In Hegel’s lectures, Bacon and Böhme represent two radically opposed philosophical approaches. In the lecture course of 1825–1826 we read: “There we had an English Lord Chancellor, here we have a German cobbler; the former is the leader of external philosophizing, the latter stands in the very opposite camp. His manner was long forgotten”.²⁸⁸ While Bacon focused on the empirical study of nature, Böhme undertook the opposite task: while Bacon’s philosophical goal was that of understanding the external world, Böhme devoted his writings to the exploration of an inner world. The introduction to Hegel’s course on the *History of Philosophy* in the academic year of 1820–1821 allows us to understand what this turning inwards of Böhme’s philosophy means, in contrast to the exteriority of Bacon’s research: “Bacon of Verulam principally recommended the observation of nature. This observation of nature, since it is a seeing of oneself, was also called philosophy. The other side is the descent of the human being into the depth of his spirit. This side belongs to Jakob Böhme, who was also called *philosophus teutonicus*.”²⁸⁹ The descent into the depths of the spirit attributed to the writings of Jakob Böhme is interpreted in the same manuscript as an expression of the principle of *subjectivity*. The withdrawal into the depth of the subject (a fundamental point to which I will return) is thus presented as an alternative to the exploration of the outside world.

The direct opposition between Baconian exteriority and Böhme’s interiority should not, however, be understood as a sterile contrast between two irreconcilable philosophies:²⁹⁰ Hegel repeatedly suggests that the opposition must be recognized precisely in order to let it evolve into a stimulating contrast. The very positioning of Bacon and Böhme in the *History of Philosophy* – side by side, on the threshold of modern thought – testifies to this. As if to say: the English chancellor and the German cobbler represent the two roots of modern philosophy, whose source lies in these two contrasting approaches. In this sense the lectures devoted to each should

²⁸⁷ See *ibid.* where Hegel uses the word *Naivität*.

²⁸⁸ V 9, 78: “Dort hatten wir einen englischen Lord Staatskanzler, hier einen deutschen Schuhmacher; jener ist der Heerführer des äußerlichen Philosophierens, dieser steht gerade im Entgegengesetzten. Seine Manier ist lange vergessen gewesen”. Cf. *History of Phil.*, 93.

²⁸⁹ V 6, 107: “Baco von Verulam hat vornehmlich darauf gewiesen, die Naturzubetrachten. Dieses Betrachten der Natur, weil es ein Selbstsehen ist, wurde auch Philosophie genannt. Die andre Seite ist das Hinuntersteigen des Menschen in die Tiefe seines Geistes. Diese Seite gehört dem Jakob Böhme an, welcher auch der *philosophus teutonicus* genannt wurde.”

²⁹⁰ In this respect, cf. *ibid.*, 122: “Die entgegengesetzten Philosophien zusammen machen die ganze Philosophie aus.”

arguably be read together, since the two perspectives appear in fact as mutually dependent and complementary.²⁹¹

This complementarity notwithstanding, it is evident that Hegel pays far greater attention to the philosophy of Böhme, to the detriment of Baconian thought. Already in the last quoted passage Hegel states that the observation of nature at the core of Bacon's enterprise "was also called philosophy". Hegel reiterates this criticism on several occasions throughout the *History of Philosophy*: ultimately, Bacon is but the greatest representative of that empirical knowledge that "the English now still call philosophy."²⁹² In contrast, Böhme deserves to be called a Teutonic philosopher, a title with which he himself signed a few of his letters. Böhme's journey into the depths of the spirit can, in other words, be legitimately defined as philosophical inquiry; the same cannot be said of Bacon's empirical approach. Evidence of Hegel's different evaluation is already apparent on a purely quantitative level: he dedicates a far greater number of pages to Jakob Böhme (not only in Michelet's edition but also, for example, in the lecture course of 1825–1826) than he does to Bacon's empiricism. In his treatment of each author, Hegel demonstrates unequivocally which of the two approaches he believes worthy of further study and detailed analysis. Böhme's writings deserve to be rediscovered from a philosophical point of view, a task which neither those who discredited them nor those who admired them undertook. This rediscovery is precisely the purpose of the long lectures Hegel dedicates to the cobbler.²⁹³

²⁹¹ Several important remarks with respect to the accurate understanding of the contrast between the Baconian point of view and Böhme's philosophy can be found in the lecture course of 1820–1821 (V 6, 56–57): "Beide stehen äußerlich fern voneinander. Zwei so einander gegenüberstehende Philosophien widerlegen einander; was zum Bewußtsein kommt, ist die Einseitigkeit desselben. Zunächst kommt zum Bewußtsein, als ob eine jede dieser Philosophien das Ganze der anderen widerlege. [...] Die Geschichte der Philosophie stellt also die Idee vor in ihrer Entwicklung". The opposition between Böhme and Bacon is, moreover, already outlined in the lectures of 1819, where it is argued that two contrasting point of views must overcome their respective limitations through *conflict* and unification: "Die nächste, notwendige Folge dieser Einseitigkeit ist, daß die entgegengesetzten Prinzipien in einen Kampf mit einander treten und einander vereinigen. Es geht daraus die gereinigte Wahrheit hervor [...]. Der Gegensatz ist also im Resultat enthalten, das nun die tiefere, bestimmtere Wahrheit ist" (ibid., 123). Hegel conserves this *specular* structure (in which the approaches of Bacon and Böhme are regarded as opposites that need to be considered in unity) from 1819 up until the later series of *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

²⁹² Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 131v: "Er [*Bacon*] steht an der Spitze des empirischen Wesens der Erkenntniß, und ist der Anführer dessen, was die Engländer noch jetzt Philosophie nennen". See also TWA 20, 76: "Bacon wird immer noch als derjenige gepriesen, der das Erkennen auf seine wahre Quelle, auf die Erfahrung gewiesen; er wird an die Spitze des empirischen Weges des Wissens gestellt. Und in der Tat ist er eigentlich der Anführer und Repräsentant dessen, was in England Philosophie genannt wird und worüber die Engländer noch durchaus nicht hinausgekommen sind."

²⁹³ The opposition between the exteriority of the Baconian method and the interiority of Böhman philosophy – along with a fervent interest in the latter – is taken up by Feuerbach (1969–2007), vol. 2, para. 42. On Feuerbach's debt to the Hegelian interpretation of Böhme's philosophy see: Bal (1998), 234–249. On Feuerbach's interpretation of Böhme see also Weckwerth (1998), 205–233; and Thom (1998), 72–73.

It should come as no surprise then that Tennemann's *History of Philosophy* presents an opposite picture. For Tennemann, Bacon was nothing short of a "brilliant and powerful spirit", a spirit who opened the door to a "better method" of philosophical reasoning.²⁹⁴ Bacon's approach is described as revolutionary enough to have changed the entire course of philosophy. Thus, not only is the English chancellor fully entitled to be considered a philosopher but he should, moreover, be appreciated as one of the most important in the history of philosophical thought. Again, the respective lengths of the chapters dedicated to Bacon and Böhme plainly reveal Tennemann's preference: he reserves far more pages to the English lord than the mere 14 pages in which Böhme's *Schwärmerei* is discussed and discarded as irrelevant to the evolution of the history of philosophy.²⁹⁵ Thus, to the enthusiastic excesses of the cobbler, Tennemann opposes the scientific precision and calm rationality of Baconian philosophy. Besides – adds Tennemann – Böhme was, like all *Schwärmer*, a "bad observer",²⁹⁶ while Bacon, naturally, is portrayed as the quintessentially good observer.

The distance between the positions of Tennemann and Hegel now emerges in its full extension. The grounds of Hegel's discussion of Böhme's philosophy have become clear through a comparison with Tennemann's text, from his interpretations of the conception of *Schwärmerei* right through to the opposition between empiricism and "depth of spirit". Hegel's use of the expression "Teutonic philosopher" to refer to Böhme cements this difference, given its significance in the context of his revaluation of Böhme's *Schwärmerei* along with its philosophical status. In one of the passages quoted above, a fundamental and famous addition is introduced: "The other side" – we read in the lecture course of 1820–1821 – "is the descent of the human being into the depth of his spirit. This side belongs to Jakob Böhme, who was also called *philosophus teutonicus*."²⁹⁷ The text continues: "We should not be at

²⁹⁴ Tennemann (1798–1819), vol. 10, 3: "Der Empirismus wurde zuerst durch Bacos genialen und kräftigen Geist begünstigt". Ibid., 7–8: "Unter den Männern mit originalem Geiste und eigenthümlicher Kraft, welche den Weg zu einer bessern Methode des Philosophierens bahnten, eigenthümliche Ansichten über viele Gegenstände verbreiteten, eine Menge von neuen Materialien zu dem künftigen Gebäude der Philosophie an den Tag förderten, und weil die Cultur des Geistes fortgeschritten war, unter mancherlei Kämpfen eine heilsame Reaction gegen das Herkömmliche, ein kräftigeres Streben in Erforschung der Wahrheit, ein freieres Prüfen des Neuen und Alten, mit einem Worte, eine Revolution bewirkten, deren Wirkungen sich auf alle Theile des menschlichen Wissens bis auf die neuesten Zeiten herab erstreckt haben, steht *Franz Baco* oben an, der gleich seinem ältern Namensvetter eine ungeheure Masse von Kenntnissen in sich vereinigte, neue Ansichten und Combinationen in Gang brachte, die erste umfassende Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften aufstellte und die Methode einer fruchtbaren Erwerbung von Erkenntnissen auf dem Wege der Erfahrung durch Beobachtung und Induction in den Gang brachte." See also *ibid.*, 11: "Sein [*Bacon's*] Hauptstreben ging auf eine gänzliche Reform des gesammten Gebietes der Wissenschaften, am meisten der Philosophie, insbesondere der Naturphilosophie".

²⁹⁵ In Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Tennemann (1798–1819), vol. 10) Bacon's philosophy covers pages 7 to 53 whereas Böhme receives only pages 183 to 197.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 10, 184: "Denn Schwärmer sind schlechte Beobachter."

²⁹⁷ V 6, 107: "Baco von Verulam hat vornehmlich darauf gewiesen, die Natur zu betrachten. Dieses Betrachten der Natur, weil es ein Selbstsehen ist, wurde auch Philosophie genannt. Die andre Seite

all ashamed of Jakob Böhme, who is the first German philosopher.”²⁹⁸ According to Hegel, a feeling of genuine shame seems to afflict a number of readers of Böhme in his time; this shame – one may suppose – has been aroused by the *form* in which Böhme presents the philosophical content of his writings: the confused presentation, the fanciful language which (only at first sight) make the material in the shoemaker’s books unworthy of philosophical speculation. We should not – Hegel states – be ashamed of Böhme. This he argues in a twofold sense: not only should we not be ashamed to read the *Theosophia Revelata*, but above all we should not be ashamed to include Böhme in the history of philosophy, to consider him to all intents and purposes a philosopher.²⁹⁹ When Hegel states that “we should not be ashamed” the point of view he takes, moreover, is that of the German people: indeed, Böhme not only deserves to be called a philosopher, he should also be recognized for his seminal role in the history of German philosophy in particular. The cobbler that Tennemann rejects as a mere irrational enthusiast was, according to Hegel, none other than the first German philosopher. Returning for a moment to Böhme’s place in Hegel’s *History of Philosophy*, placed alongside Bacon in a transitional phase toward Descartes and modern thought, it is clear that Hegel is giving the Teutonic philosopher a special role: the shoemaker’s writings mark the beginning of the history of philosophy in the German language.³⁰⁰

Finally, a note by Hegel on the meaning of the epithet “Teutonic philosopher” is particularly revealing: “*philosophia teutonica*”, we read in the lectures edited by Michelet, “so mysticism was called in earlier times”.³⁰¹ At the roots of German philosophy one finds not only a cobbler, but also – and this is particularly significant – a perfect equivalence between mysticism and Teutonic philosophy. What used to be called mysticism (which brings to mind the contrast between *earlier times* and *today* in the *Zusatz* to paragraph 82 of the *Encyclopedia*), is in reality no different to Böhme’s Teutonic philosophy. In other words, German philosophy, which began with the writings of Böhme, emerges directly from the speculative mysticism described above. With this correspondence between mysticism, Teutonic philosophy and speculation we come full circle; all that is left now is to examine Hegel’s interpretation of the Teutonic philosophy – that is to say of the speculative mysticism – of Jakob Böhme.

ist das Hinuntersteigen des Menschen in die Tiefe seines Geistes. Diese Seite gehört dem Jakob Böhme an, welcher auch der philosophus teutonicus genannt wurde.”

²⁹⁸ Ibid.: “Wir haben uns des Jakob Böhme, welcher der erste deutsche Philosoph ist, ganz und gar nicht zu schämen.” The same phrase is present, with a few changes, in *Werke* 15, 297 (cf. TWA 20, 91).

²⁹⁹ Coleridge (1969–2002), vol. 1, 146, uses a similar expression: “Say rather how dare I be ashamed of the Teutonic theosophist, Jacob Behmen?”

³⁰⁰ Bal has highlighted the fact that Böhme represents a point of intersection and a crucial cross-roads (a *Knotenpunkt*) in Hegel’s *History of Philosophy* between Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation (see Bal (1998), 240).

³⁰¹ *Werke* 15, 296–297 (cf. TWA 20, 91): “*philosophia teutonica*, – so hieß schon früher Mysticismus.” On Hegel’s use of the expression “*philosophia teutonica*” in the sense of “wahrhaftige, echte Philosophie”, see Bal (1998), 239.

4 Appendix. The Loss of Mystical Mobility: Schelling

Hegel's assessment of the enthusiastic mobility characteristic of Neoplatonic philosophy allows us to reconsider a topic already widely discussed in the secondary literature, namely Hegel's appraisal of Schelling's philosophy of identity. The purpose of this brief appendix is not to address in detail what remains a complex and already well developed theme,³⁰² but simply to suggest how the controversial issue of the divergence between Hegel and Schelling, in particular after 1807, can be included within the present analysis of the relationship between mysticism and movement. Without claiming to be exhaustive with respect to Hegel's criticism of Schelling's notion of the Absolute, I would like to show the relevance of this dispute by referring to their conflicting approaches as readers of Böhme. As we have seen, Hegel's rereading of the meaning and role of *Schwärmerei* is based on the importance of mobility: enthusiasm becomes the expression of an attempt – a *philosophical* attempt – to reach a dimension of pure thought while keeping *speculation* active, that is to say without leaping beyond the limit, an act which condemned the ecstasy of the Romantics to a total emptiness of content. For Hegel it is precisely this type of movement that distinguishes the vitality of Neoplatonic philosophy, the medieval mystics and Böhme from Schelling's Absolute that Hegel judges to be immobile, lacking the essential characteristic that could be defined as speculative mobility. Indeed, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* we read the following:

Schelling appears to have this in common with Plato as well as with the Neoplatonists: the placing of cognition in the inner intuition of the eternal ideas, wherein the cognition is suddenly and immediately in the Absolute. Except that when Plato speaks of this intuition of the soul, which has freed itself from all finite empirical or reflected knowing, and the Neoplatonists speak of the rapture of thought, in which cognition is immediate cognition of the Absolute, this essential difference must be noted, that with Plato's cognition of the Universal or its intellectuality, in which all opposition is sublated as something real, dialectics is associated, i.e. the conceived necessity of the sublation of all oppositions – Plato does not begin with it. They are sublated in such way that in Plato there is movement, in which they sublate themselves. The Absolute is itself to be grasped as this movement of self-sublation; this is therefore real cognition and cognition of the Absolute.³⁰³

³⁰² On the slow differentiation of the Hegelian Absolute with respect to the influence of Schelling, see for example Finelli (1996), 268–269. An important document concerning the early stages of this process is Troxler (1988). On Hegel's critique of “intellektuelle Anschauung”, with reference to the *Phenomenology* in particular, see also Michelet (1843), 133 et seq.

³⁰³ *Werke* 15, 667 (cf. TWA 20, 439–440): “Schelling scheint mit Plato, wie mit den Neuplatonikern, dieß gemein zu haben, das Wissen in die innere Anschauung der ewigen Ideen zu setzen, worin die Erkenntniß unvermittelt und unmittelbar im Absoluten ist. Allein wenn Plato von dieser Anschauung der Seele, die von allem endlichen empirischen oder reflektirten Erkennen sich befreit hat, und die Neuplatoniker von der Entzückung des Denkens sprechen, in welcher das Erkennen unmittelbares Erkennen des Absoluten ist: so ist dabei wesentlich dieser Unterschied zu bemerken, daß mit Plato's Erkennen des Allgemeinen oder seiner Intellektualität, worin aller Gegensatz sich als ein realer aufhebt, die Dialektik vergesellschaftet ist, d. h. die begriffene Nothwendigkeit des Aufhebens dieser Gegensätze, – daß Plato nicht damit anfängt; sie sind aufgehoben so, daß bei ihm ist die Bewegung, worin sie sich aufheben. Das Absolute ist selbst als diese Bewegung des Sich-aufhebens zu fassen; dies ist dann wirkliches Erkennen und Erkennen des Absoluten.”

Hegel begins by detecting a strong similarity between Schelling's approach and that of Plato and the Neoplatonists on the level of the role played by intuition (*Anschauung*), positioned at the very foundation of the cognitive process. As in the Platonic doctrine, according to which knowledge is the fruit of an inner intuition of eternal ideas, so too from Schelling's point of view, cognition is unmediated knowledge of the Absolute. Thus, Hegel can state that in both cases intuition is the key to gaining access to knowledge, a knowledge which springs immediately from the source, the Absolute or Platonic ideas.

Having established this basic consonance, Hegel goes on to develop a crucial distinction between Plato and the Neoplatonists on the one hand and Schelling on the other. Neither the Platonic "intuition of the soul" ("Anschauung der Seele") nor the "rapture of thought" ("Entzückung des Denkens") to which the Neoplatonists refer actually regard immediacy as their point of departure, despite suggesting that the process of gaining knowledge is fundamentally characterized by immediacy. More precisely, in the case of Plato and the Neoplatonists immediacy is not simultaneously presented as the starting point and destination of the acquisition of knowledge. Plato does not envisage the overcoming of opposition, or the passage into immediacy, as a precondition: rather this is reached through a process of elaboration of opposites. According to Hegel, this process is essentially dialectical. Plato does not *leap* beyond the limit; he does not eliminate mediation in favor of immediacy a priori, but reaches immediacy through the dialectical overcoming of mediation itself. This is why neither Platonic insight nor Neoplatonic ecstasy are inimical to thought (so to speak) but in fact represent, as we have seen on several occasions, a form of pure thought not incompatible with conceptuality.

The notion of movement (*Bewegung*), which comes into play in the last lines of the text, is at the heart of Hegel's argument. The immediacy of Plato and the Neoplatonists is not without movement, because it is achieved through a dialectical interplay of opposites, which incorporates mediation itself. This movement makes it possible to distinguish between different types of immediacy, and in particular between that of Schelling on the one hand and of Plato and the Neoplatonists on the other. In the case of Schelling, immediacy is immobile because it lacks the internal dialectic articulation that both Platonic intuition and Neoplatonic ecstasy (which Hegel defines, significantly, as an ecstasy of thought) successfully preserve. In the case of Plato, the friction that develops between opposites, and which gives rise to the dialectical movement, is not assumed to be already resolved. As a result, immediacy is not understood as a preventive elimination of mediation, but as an approach which contains mediation itself. In other words, neither Plato's *Anschauung*, nor the ecstasy of the Neoplatonists, bypass the limit (*horos*). Instead, they confront it; both are ways of knowing the Absolute: a knowledge that can only take place if immediacy is reached through the movement that arises from a relationship with the limit.

Having established this difference between mobile and immobile immediacy, Hegel goes on to attack Schelling's philosophy of indifference: "Schelling determines this Absolute as the absolute identity or indifference, $A=A$, of the subjective and the objective, or of the finite and infinite, accidentally now in this, now in that,

form of the opposition."³⁰⁴ The equivalence $A=A$, as it is laid out by Schelling,³⁰⁵ stands as an example of an immediate approach condemned to absolute immobility.³⁰⁶ The intellectual intuition on which it is based does not lead to a *speculative* development, but to a purely external observation: the opposites are not considered in movement, they are not considered in the act of mirroring one another, but only in the stillness of their total difference, or of their perfect identity.³⁰⁷ This philosophy of identity is deprived of the internal dialectic which Plato and Plotinus preserve and which allows them to focus on the *transition* to unity, that is to say, on the process arising out of the speculative idea. In this way the movement that was present in the intuitive approach of the Neoplatonists is lost in Schelling's conception of the Absolute, even if their approaches are, to a certain extent, founded on similar premises. In Schelling the idea of a unity of opposites – Hegel argues – is not dialectically elaborated on the basis of their own trespassing (*übergehen*) into unity: instead, Schelling calls on intellectual intuition to guarantee the possibility of thinking the identity of opposites. In this way, intuition blocks the movement of opposites, pushing them into an absolute unity in which they can only disappear as such. While, for the Neoplatonists, intuition and ecstasy represented an impulse (though limited in its possibilities, due to the extensive use of images) toward the achievement of a dynamic understanding of unity, Schelling's intuition produces quite the opposite effect.

Nevertheless, Hegel insists that Schelling's undifferentiated unity is not for that matter entirely "empty" and "dry" – an emphasis which is markedly different with respect to the conception of the Absolute he criticizes in the *Phenomenology* pre-

³⁰⁴ Ibid. (cf. TWA 20, 440): "Dieß Absolute bestimmt Schelling als die absolute Identität oder Indifferenz, $A=A$, des Subjektiven und Objektiven, oder des Endlichen und Unendlichen, zufällig bald in dieser, bald in einer andern Form des Gegensatzes."

³⁰⁵ Hegel's critique is aimed at Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie*, without taking into account – at least in this particular context – the subsequent evolution of Schelling's philosophy. With respect to this see, for example, Asmuth (2002), 34: "Das Absolute ist für Schelling – oder besser: für den Schelling auf den Hegel sich beruft – absolute Identität."

³⁰⁶ One can only mention here that Hegel's criticism of Schelling's immobile immediacy presents certain affinities with the criticism of Jacobi's immediate (and from Hegel's perspective unphilosophical) approach. See for example, *Werke* 15, 654–655 (cf. TWA 20, 427–428): "Schelling ist einer Seits von der fichte'schen Philosophie ausgegangen, und anderer Seits macht auch er, wie Jacobi, zum Princip das unmittelbare Wissen, – die intelligente Anschauung, die der Mensch haben müsse, und besonders der Philosoph. Der Inhalt dieser intelligenten Anschauung, was in ihr Gegenstand wird, ist nun auch das Absolute, Gott, das Anundfürsichseiende, aber als konkret, sich in sich vermittelnd, als die absolute Einheit des Subjektiven und Objektiven ausgedrückt oder als die absolute Indifferenz des Subjektiven und Objektiven." On the difference between "intelligente Anschauung" and "intellektuelle Anschauung" see *Werke* 15, 654 and 659 (cf. TWA 20, 427 and 432).

³⁰⁷ *Werke* 15, 667–668 (cf. TWA 20, 440): "Diese Idee hat nun nicht die Dialektik, als durch welche diese Gegensätze sich selbst zum Übergehen in ihre Einheit bestimmen, sondern die intellektuelle Anschauung zu ihrer Bewährung: so wie auch der Fortgang nicht die immanente Entwicklung aus der spekulativen Idee ist, sondern nach der Weise äußerer Reflexion geschieht." On the trajectory that leads to this Hegelian critique and, in particular, on the concepts of *Spekulation*, *Anschauung* and *Reflexion*, see Baum (1976).

cisely on the grounds of its intrinsic “emptiness”.³⁰⁸ Hegel’s problem with Schelling’s conception of the Absolute lies less in its lack of content than it does in its reduction of internal opposition to something purely external. In other words, Schelling does not consider the role of the contrast between opposites dialectically and as a result this is completely abandoned at the threshold of the concept of the Absolute. The latter, deprived of the dynamism produced by the dialectic interpenetration of opposites, is ultimately motionless.

Hegel’s criticism of the motionlessness of this philosophy of identity reappears somewhat unexpectedly in a decisive element that distinguishes Hegel and Schelling as readers of Böhme, namely their interpretation of the importance of *Ungrund* as it is conceived by Böhme.

The principle of privation (the prefix *un-*) is contained in the very lexical root of the term *Un-grund*, the *Un-grounded*, employed by Böhme, as if to say that the Divine itself cannot be defined in any way if not as that which lacks a foundation. From this perspective, Böhme finds himself firmly in the territory of the German mystical tradition: Böhme’s attempt to conceive – and thus to define through language – a God before God, or a God as *abyss*, immediately recalls Eckhart’s conception of a divine *Abgrund*. Just as Eckhart distinguishes between God (*Gott*) and what is beyond God, namely Divinity (*Gottheit*) or the Abyss (*Abgrund*), so too Böhme uses the term *Ungrund* to describe God as he is “in himself”, independent from creatures, “devoid of affectability and devoid of inclinations since there is nothing before him, toward which he might be inclined, neither evil nor good”, as we read, for example, in *On the Election of Grace (Von der Gnadenwahl)*.³⁰⁹ This abyssal God cannot even logically be called God since there is no relationship with a creation, nor a will to create: the *Ungrund* is ultimately devoid of everything, even a name. Böhme’s choice of the term *Ungrund* seems then to result directly from the radicalism of the conception that the word expresses.

In his monograph on Jakob Böhme, Alexandre Koyré defines Böhme’s *Ungrund* as “the absolutely indeterminate Absolute,”³¹⁰ by which he means to emphasize the fact that the Divine as *Ungrund* is beyond any possible distinction – between, for

³⁰⁸ See for example *Werke* 15, 661–662 (cf. TWA 20, 433): “Das Absolute ist die absolute Identität des Subjektiven und Objektiven, die absolute Indifferenz des Reellen und Ideellen, der Form und des Wesens, des Allgemeinen und Besonderen; in der Identität Beider ist weder das Eine noch das Andere. Es ist aber auch nicht abstrakte, leere, trockene Einheit: Das ist die logische Identität, das Klassificiren nach Gemeinschaftlichem; der Unterschied bleibt aber da draußen liegen.” In this sense, Hegel’s criticism of Schelling does not repeat, in my opinion, his attack on the pseudo-mysticism of the Romantics and of the followers of Schelling: for this reason I have placed Hegel’s confrontation with Schelling’s philosophy of identity in the appendix to the present chapter. De Negri offers a different interpretation: cf. De Negri (1969), 253.

³⁰⁹ See BS, vol. 6: *Von der Gnadenwahl*, chap. 1, 1–3, in particular 1, 3: “Denn man kann nicht von Gott sagen, daß Er dis oder das sey, böse oder gut, daß Er in sich selber Unterscheide habe: Denn Er ist in sich selber Naturlos, sowol *Affect-* und *Creaturlos*. Er hat keine Neiglichkeit zu etwas, denn es ist nicht vor Ihme, darzu Er sich könnte neigen, weder Böses noch Gutes: Er ist in sich selber der Ungrund, ohne einigen Willen gegen der Natur und Creatur, als ein ewig Nichts; es ist keine Qual in Ihme, noch etwas das sich zu Ihme oder von Ihme könnte neigen.”

³¹⁰ See Koyré (1929), 280–281.

example, good and evil, but also between creature and creator. In *On the Election of Grace* Böhme writes: "In it [*Ungrund*] everything is equally eternal without beginning, of equal weight, size and purpose."³¹¹ In this sense the *Ungrund* is absolutely indeterminate since it eschews any attempt at characterization; it can be thought of as in an immobile equilibrium, alien to every form of beginning and not in the least compelled to move its own abyssal calm.

Koyré's definition highlights the similarities between Böhme's *Ungrund* and Schelling's Absolute, starting with the main characteristic: the absolute indeterminacy that Koyré ascribes to the *Absolute* (a term which does not belong to Böhme's vocabulary) as conceived by Jakob Böhme. In other words, Koyré seems to be describing Böhme's *Ungrund* with a terminology that is rather more fitting to the Absolute of Schelling: this consonance, which Koyré's expression suggests only indirectly, is indeed the crux of the problem.

It is well known that the concept of *Ungrund* plays an important role in Schelling's *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (*On the Essence of Human Freedom*) of 1809. It has often been argued that the use of the term *Ungrund* in this text is one of the more obvious signs of the author's reception of Böhme's mysticism,³¹² even if Böhme is never mentioned.³¹³ In an essay dedicated to the role of the Böhmanian concept in Schelling's *Freiheitslehre*, Bruneder argues that there is a clear relationship between Böhme's *Ungrund* and Schelling's Absolute as non-difference.³¹⁴ The consonance between Schelling and Böhme, moreover, which hinges on the term *Ungrund*, had already been highlighted by several contemporaries of Schelling: Coleridge, for example, according to whom Schelling was simply restating Böhme's own doctrine,³¹⁵ or Schopenhauer, who defined Schelling's *Freiheitslehre* as nothing less than a reworking of Böhme's *Mysterium magnum*, even if Schopenhauer deplores Schelling's reformulation for losing both the significance and the wonder of the original text of Böhme.³¹⁶

Given these elements, that provide the framework for Schelling's reception of Böhme's mysticism especially with respect to the relationship with Baader, it is no coincidence that, although we find no direct references to Böhme in *On the Essence*

³¹¹ BS, vol 6: *Von der Gnadenwahl*, ch. 1.3.

³¹² See for example Schelling (1964), 178. Fuhrmans' interpretation is also related in Ehrhardt (1995), 221–234, here 233. See also Ohashi (1995), 235–252, here, 241. Finally, see Brown (1977), 116, where it is argued that *On the Essence of Human Freedom* marks the beginning of Schelling's reception of Böhme: according to Brown, the text shows the strong impact that the reading of *Theosophia Revelata* had on the language used by Schelling, resulting in a marked change in the orientation with respect to his philosophical trajectory up until 1809.

³¹³ See Brown (1977), 118; Ohashi (1995), 240 and 242.

³¹⁴ Bruneder (1958), 110: "Doch besteht ein ideengeschichtlicher Zusammenhang zwischen Jakob Böhmes Lehre vom Ungrunde und Schellings Auffassung vom Absoluten als Indifferenz [...]. Es umfaßt das Problem des Ungrundes, der, um es vorwegzunehmen, *das Wesen* der menschlichen Freiheit bei Schelling ist."

³¹⁵ Coleridge's opinion is recounted by Robinson (1938), vol. 1, 108.

³¹⁶ Schopenhauer (1966–1975), vol. 3, 131 (also quoted in Bruneder (1958), 101, note 1).

of *Human Freedom*, Baader is mentioned several times. Schelling, in particular when he makes use of genuinely Böhman terms, refers at the same time to Baader's use of the same terms.³¹⁷ These references are one more element in favor of the suggestion that Baader represented an important channel in Schelling's encounter with the writings of Böhme.

The specific problem of *Ungrund*, that is to say both its derivation from Böhme's terminology and the link it establishes with Baader, was already evident to Rosenkranz, who writes in his *Wissenschaft der logischen Idee* (*Science of the Logical Idea*): "Jakob Böhme, Baader and Schelling also call God the *Ungrund*, which first grounds itself through its object. *Ungrund* is here the first identity of the indifference of the divine essence, to the extent that it [the essence] is still thought as in itself without differentiation."³¹⁸

As we have seen, Schelling does not refer explicitly to the writings of Böhme in which the term *Ungrund* appears. It would seem that the latter is instead absorbed and integrated within Schelling's own language, without any reference to the source. It is through this process of appropriation that Schelling includes Böhme's *Ungrund* in his own system of reference. As Rosenkranz also recognizes, for Schelling the *Ungrund* stands for absolute identity, for absolute indifference beyond all oppositions: in other words, and in a manner clearly reliant on Böhme, identity is for Schelling beyond the opposition between light and darkness, between good and evil.³¹⁹

The conception of the Un-grounded interpreted as perfect indifference is a fundamental element – or even *the* fundamental element – of Schelling's reception of Böhme's mysticism. In this sense Schelling seems to find in Böhme and in his use of the word *Ungrund* a precursor for the development of a philosophy of identity, such as it is presented in his work of 1809, in which we read: "There must be an essence *before* all ground and before everything which exists, thus before any duality at all. What can we call it other than the original ground or even better the Un-grounded?"³²⁰ In order to describe the absolute indifference which can receive no predicate and which precedes any distinction between opposites, Schelling selects a very specific term from the language of Böhme. Indeed, he chooses the very word used by the latter to define that which precedes the distinction between

³¹⁷ See Ohashi (1995), 241.

³¹⁸ Rosenkranz (1858–1859), vol 1 (*Metaphysik*), 336: "Jakob Böhme, Baader und Schelling nennen auch Gott den Ungrund, der sich selbst durch seinen Gegenwurf erst zum Grunde macht. Ungrund ist hier die erste Identität der Indifferenz des göttlichen Wesens, sofern es noch als in sich unterschiedlos gedacht wird."

³¹⁹ See Schelling (1856–1861), vol. 7, 406. The passage is also quoted by Moiso (1995), 189–220, here 201. See also, in the same volume, Sturma (1995), 255–269, here 264. In addition, see Ohashi (1995), 246: "Der Ungrund ist für Schelling zwar das schlechthin betrachtete Absolute, somit Gott, der aber nicht Gott genannt werden kann".

³²⁰ Schelling (1856–1861), vol. 7, 406: "Es muß *vor* allem Grund und vor allem Existierenden, also überhaupt vor aller Dualität, ein Wesen seyn; wie können wir es anders nennen als den Urgrund oder vielmehr *Ungrund*?" The passage is also cited and discussed by Moiso (1995), 202.

Father and Son: a bottomless abyss in which the definition of God itself is consumed.³²¹

Having established the importance of Schelling's reception of Böhme's concept of *Ungrund* within his philosophy of identity, the comparison with Hegel's reception of the *Theosophia Revelata* reveals a crucial difference between the two: Hegel does not mention the term *Ungrund*, either in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicated to Böhme, or in other places where he refers to Böhme's philosophy. The absence of this word is undoubtedly problematic: the term *Ungrund* is conspicuous in the long lectures on Böhme for its very absence. Indeed, it is a key word in the lexicon of *Theosophia Revelata*, and was particularly popular among the principal readers of Böhme in Hegel's time (not least Baader and Schelling) and Hegel could not have been unaware of it. Even if we were to presume that the absence of a concept so crucial to Böhme's mysticism were due to an insufficiently thorough reading on Hegel's part,³²² there is still no doubt that Hegel was aware of the meaning of the term through the interpretations of his contemporaries – starting with *On the Essence of Human Freedom*. This strange absence can thus only be a result of Hegel's desire not to include a discussion of the Un-grounded in his presentation of Böhmanian philosophy. Hegel, in my opinion, carries out a careful operation of exclusion, prompted by Schelling's reception of the term, which must have been his most immediate point of comparison.

First, *Ungrund* plays a precise role in *On the Essence of Human Freedom*, where it represents the absolute identity of $A=A$ that Hegel criticizes directly in the two passages quoted at the beginning of this appendix. Hegel's silence on the topic of Böhme's concept of *Ungrund* is thus closely bound up with his polemic against the fixity of Schelling's Absolute. By remaining silent on the concept of the Un-grounded, Hegel is in fact attacking once more, but from a new perspective, those interpretations of the Absolute which are deprived of mystical mobility. As Haldane has argued, "Böhme, to begin with, speaks of the Abyss where all is indifferent, Hegel's 'night in which all cows are black'".³²³ The bottomless divine abyss is nothing but the type of Absolute sarcastically presented in the preface to the *Phenomenology*. This can only be an indirect parallel, for Hegel never comments on the Böhmanian concept of the Un-grounded, not even critically. Yet this analogy between the *Ungrund* and Schelling's Absolute, which encounter each other on the terrain of absolute indifference, is the key to understanding not only the reasons for the absence of the former in Hegel's interpretation, but also the reasons for Hegel's interest in Böhmanian mysticism in general. Indeed, behind

³²¹ It should be noted that Schelling often uses the terms *Urgrund* and *Ungrund* interchangeably, even if in the last quotation from *On the Essence of Human Freedom* the radicalness of the second with respect to the first is clear. Besides, the distinction between the two is problematic already in the writings of Böhme.

³²² For example, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel refers to a *Tabula* (table or recapitulatory schema) found in letter 47, in which Böhme uses the term *Ungrund* repeatedly: the absence of the word in Hegel's lectures appears to be the result of a cautious decision.

³²³ Haldane (1897), 155.

Hegel's omission of the Un-grounded lies both an unspoken criticism of Schelling's Absolute and an attempt to dissociate himself from the latter's own reception of Böhme's mysticism. Thus, the rift between Schelling and Hegel is also visible in the difference between their respective interpretations of Böhme's *Theosophia Revelata*, starting with the central role that *Ungrund* plays in the first case and its total absence in the second.

According to Garniron the absence of any reference to the Un-grounded in the texts discussed by Hegel should be considered alongside Hegel's emphasis on Böhme's notion of the Trinity.³²⁴ Let us return to the link between Böhme and the Neoplatonists, that is to say to the relationship between mysticism and speculation discussed above. From Hegel's perspective, the fundamental element of Böhme's mysticism is the Trinity, the *speculative movement* of the Divine, and not the state of indifference in which the *Ungrund* is beyond every division and is thus immobile. In other words, Hegel's interpretation of Böhme highlights an aspect of the latter's philosophy which is diametrically opposed to the one upon which Schelling insists in *On the Essence of Human Freedom*: the Trinity, that is to say movement and separation above and against the conception of a limitless Absolute, devoid of internal divisions. Following the argument proposed by Garniron, we can choose to read the absence of *Ungrund* in Hegel's lectures as a response to Schelling's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism, an interpretation that takes Böhme in the direction of *Identitätsphilosophie*. For Hegel, Böhme's mysticism is not a leap beyond the limit, into the night in which all cows are black. What makes Böhme's endeavor a philosophical experiment which deserves to be carefully considered in the context of the evolution of the history of philosophy (as evidenced by the exceptionally large space that Hegel dedicates to him) is, for Hegel, speculation itself, the reflecting of God in the Other and the movement of the Divine. In order to show what he considered the most important feature of Böhman mysticism, as well as Böhme's main contribution to the history of philosophical thought, Hegel intentionally left out any reference to *Ungrund* – with its possible connection to Schelling's interpretation. As if to say: it is not in the conception of God as *Ungrund* that the philosophical significance of Böhme's writings resides. As a result, Hegel's reading of Böhme emerges as *consciously selective*.

The distance between Hegel and Schelling with respect to the role of *Ungrund* reinforces the argument according to which Hegel's interpretation of the philosophy of Böhme cannot be separated from his reflection on the main characteristics of mysticism as speculation. Within the line of tradition traced in these pages (from the Neoplatonists to the medieval mystics and to Böhme), Böhme's Teutonic philosophy is for Hegel the most complete and vitally coherent example of the philosophical richness of this kind of mystical approach. For this reason, the third and final chapter of the present investigation will proceed to a detailed analysis of the texts in which Hegel examines the philosophical depth of Böhme's *Theosophia Revelata*.

³²⁴ Hegel (1995), vol. 6, 1371.

Chapter 3

Hegel as Interpreter of Böhme

A philosopher doesn't rest until he has the center of a thing.¹

1 The Beginnings: References to Böhme in the Jena Texts

The reconstruction of Hegel's interpretation of Böhme presented in this section follows the hypothesis that his interpretation evolved over time. Hegel's readings of Böhme, it is argued, developed significantly in the aftermath of his stay in Jena (particularly in the years after 1811–1812) and Hegel embarked on a process of progressive selection of specific themes, which he addressed with increasing attention. As we have seen, traces of Hegel's interest in Böhme can already be detected in his writings from the Jena years, and these therefore mark the beginning of Hegel's exploration. Hegel's digression on Böhme in the letter to van Ghert of 29 July 1811 reveals that, five years on from his stay in Jena, the philosopher still considered his knowledge of *Theosophia Revelata* incomplete, and to a certain extent superficial, owing to the fact that he did not have his own copy to study. In fact, as we will see, in the later years Hegel returned to several aspects already outlined in the Jena writings, and developed and refined them significantly. In other words, these early reflections mark the beginning both of a journey toward a more and more pervasive use of Böhmian terminology in the published texts (in particular in the *Encyclopedia* and in *Logic*), and of Hegel's most extensive discussion of Böhme's philosophy in his lectures, particularly those in the *Philosophy of Religion* and *History of Philosophy*. By tracing a line of continuity between the Jena writings and the Berlin lectures, I will show the connections and links between Hegel's frequent yet often brief references to Böhme in published texts (references that are seldom

¹In BS, vol. 5: *Erste Schutz-Schrift gegen Balthasar Tilken*, ch. 1, 616: "ein Philosophus ruhet nicht, er habe denn das Zentrum eines Dinges."

considered organically because of their brevity and their ostensibly fragmentary nature). Hegel's detailed lectures on Böhme in the *History of Philosophy*, moreover, will be examined and considered as the outcome of a protracted engagement with the latter's writings.

I will also show how this approach is accompanied by a consciously selective reading of *Theosophia Revelata*. This selective orientation – increasingly in favor of elements deemed to be of philosophical importance to the detriment of those considered unworthy of philosophical analysis – is the keystone of Hegel's approach to the mysticism of Jakob Böhme. This chapter will give an account of this approach, beginning with the Jena lectures and aphorisms. A preliminary analysis of these early texts will allow us to situate Hegel's later discussion of Böhme's mysticism more accurately; accounting both for the elements of these crucial first interpretations that survive into the later writings and for those that are abandoned along the way.² This examination of the beginnings and the subsequent developments of Hegel's reflection on the philosophical content of Böhme's writings can be said to run parallel to the distinction between two types of mysticism examined in the previous chapter, and in a certain sense to derive from it.

Hegel's reading of *Theosophia Revelata* belongs to a discussion already well under way since the early years, a discussion focussing on the mystical phenomenon and on its role in relation to philosophical inquiry. If it is true that Hegel only began his detailed study of Böhme after 1811–1812, it is important to note that this project began after his attack on the pseudo-mysticism of the Romantics in the *Phenomenology*, an attack that laid the foundations for a distinction between two radically different mystical approaches. Hegel's encounter with *Theosophia Revelata* must be evaluated within this frame of reference which, beginning with the criticism of unmediated pseudo-mysticism, develops the notion of a speculative form of mysticism whose inner complexities (from the difference between secret and mystery, to the definition of speculation as movement of the Divine) set the scene for Hegel's interpretation of Böhmean mysticism in particular.

1.1 *Mysticism as a Middle Way: Böhme and Oriental Mysticism*

The specific example of Böhme's mysticism in the evolution of Hegel's reflection on *mysticism* is found for the first time in a fragment dating back to the Jena lectures, and which Rosenkranz quotes in his *Life of Hegel*: in searching for a definition

²I therefore don't agree with Jaeschke, who states that there was no change whatsoever in Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism between Jena and Berlin (see Jaeschke (2003), 404: "Hegels Stellung zu Böhme, dem 'philosophus teutonicus', ist seit seinem Jenaer Jahren unverändert"). The comparison I have made, on the basis of unpublished manuscripts, will show instead that not only is the evolution apparent but it is of fundamental importance in understanding the nature of Hegel's interest in Böhme's writings.

of mysticism, Hegel refers to the case of Jakob Böhme as an explanatory model. The passage reads:

There is indeed a *turbid medium* between *feeling* and *science*, a speculative feeling or the Idea that cannot free itself from imaginativeness and feeling, and yet it is not only imaginativeness and feeling anymore. I mean *mysticism* [...].³

Hegel places mysticism in a peculiar position, namely that of a middle term, straddling feeling and science, in a state of imbalance that is difficult to mark out with words. This confused, nebulous meeting and melding point is by its very nature difficult to define, so that Hegel suggests various alternatives, using first the expression “speculative feeling” and then appealing to the broadest explanation: “the Idea that cannot free itself from imaginativeness and feeling, and yet it is not only imagination and feeling anymore”. Mysticism occupies a borderline area, in which various tendencies are expressed that come into contact with each other in a relationship of mutual contamination – where feeling is not extraneous to speculative rigor and where science at the same time does not lose contact with the confused and subterranean world of imagination. It could be said that mysticism therefore appears as a problematic, conflictual terrain in which elements regarded as contradictory coexist: in other words, mysticism is not free from feeling and imagination, though it represents a path that aims in the last analysis toward science, speculation, idea.

Returning to the above quotation from the point where we left it, Hegel’s discussion is developed in the following way: “I mean *mysticism* or rather the *oriental* attempts, as much as those of *Jakob Böhme*, to represent the Idea.”⁴ The conception of mysticism outlined in the lines above is expressed in two different approaches which, according to Hegel, share the same basic attitude – Oriental mysticism on the one hand and the mysticism of Jakob Böhme on the other.⁵ The element they have in common is the *attempt* to lead toward the exposition of the idea, an attempt made on that same unstable terrain that Hegel has just described, where the tendency toward the speculative idea does not eliminate (or is unable to eliminate) the substratum of imagination. Moreover, in the passages we have already considered from *The Spirit of Christianity*, the mystical moment was described as an unstable phase, subject to a continual tension, or as the fulcrum of an ongoing process: the characterization of mysticism as a middle way in this Jena fragment can therefore be read as a continuation of what had been stated earlier.

It should also be remembered that in the draft of the letter written to van Ghert in 1811, Hegel defined Böhme’s theosophy as “one of the most notable attempts by a profound but uneducated man to conceive the most intimate nature of absolute

³*Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 338 (cf. GW 5, 468): “Es gibt zwar ein *trübes Mittelding* zwischen dem *Gefühl* und der *Wissenschaft*, ein spekulatives Gefühl oder die Idee, welche sich nicht aus der Phantasie und dem Gefühl befreien kann und doch auch nicht mehr nur Phantasie und Gefühl ist. Ich meine den *Mystizismus*”. Cf. HL, 182 et seq.

⁴*Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 338 (cf. GW 5, 468): “Ich meine den *Mystizismus* oder vielmehr die *Orientalischen* eben so sehr, als die *Jakob-Böhmischen* Versuche, die Idee darzustellen.”

⁵On Hegel and Oriental mysticism, see Muratori (2011b), 156–167.

essence.” Here again, in the Jena lectures, Hegel emphasizes the characteristic of tension, of the exertion toward the comprehension of the idea, of absolute essence. But in this case Jakob Böhme is compared with Oriental mysticism, and both are used as an example of that middle position between science and feeling which Hegel defines here with the word *Mystizismus*.

The parallel between Böhme and Oriental mysticism is a point of crucial importance, to which Hegel returns in various later writings of the Jena period, up to the Berlin review of the paper by von Humboldt *Über die unter dem Namen Bhagavad-Gita bekannte Episode des Mahabharata* (*On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known as Bhagavad-Gita*, Berlin 1826).⁶ But the recurrence of this comparison has led various critics to suggest that Hegel’s interpretation of Böhme’s mysticism remains unchanged from Jena to Berlin.⁷ In reality, even though the parallel remains, its significance radically alters; this is caused in the first place by the fact that there is an evolution in Hegel’s view of Oriental mysticism, and furthermore – an aspect even more relevant to our argument – by Hegel’s further study of the specific nature of Böhme’s mysticism.

The Jena lectures define Oriental mysticism in the following way:

Orientalism is elevated above mere beauty or above the limited figuration. That which it tries to grasp in the imagination of its figures, is the infinite, formless, but it sublates its image over and over again, always pushed from the infinite beyond the image, and it tries itself out always in a new one, which it also lets vanish yet again.⁸

Orientalism uses the instrument of imagination to define the infinite, that which has no form. The imagination generates a whirl of images: each of these is used in an attempt to approach the description of infinite essence, then it is abandoned and replaced by another, in a continual creation of figures, of representations, each of which is incapable of adequately expressing that which in itself is devoid of form, and each therefore incapable of fully accomplishing its task. This very use of imaginative images takes Oriental mysticism, according to Hegel, “high above pure and simple beauty and above the limited formation”, as if to say that this movement of creation and dissolving of figures prevents it hardening into a static and empty conception of beauty, as well as into the limited form of one single image to express infinity.

The parallel with Böhme’s mysticism already emerges from these elements: it brings to mind the way in which Hegel discusses Böhme’s use of representation

⁶In *Werke* 16, 361–435 (cf. TWA 11, 131–204).

⁷This is the view argued, for example, by Moneti Codignola (1999), 181–199. In this careful study the author suggests that Hegel’s interpretation did not significantly change after 1811, but that the direct reading of the texts simply led to a more detailed study of the themes that Hegel had already outlined in previous years. In my view the value of these studies is much greater than what Moneti Codignola claims.

⁸*Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 338 (cf. GW 5, 468): “Der Orientalismus ist über die bloße Schönheit oder über die beschränkte Gestaltung erhaben. Es ist das Unendliche, Gestaltlose, welches er in die Phantasie seiner Bilder zu fassen sich bemüht, aber, vom Unendlichen immer über das Bild hinausgetrieben, sein Bild immer wieder aufhebt, und sich in einem neuen versucht, das er eben so wieder verschwinden läßt.”

(*Vorstellung*) in the letter to van Ghert mentioned earlier, in which it is said that Böhme uses images, always interpreting them in a new manner. Creative imagination is therefore a point of contact between Jakob Böhme and Oriental mysticism.⁹ But the following part of the fragment establishes an important difference between the two approaches. In fact, referring to Oriental mysticism Hegel writes: “Therefore it is only *sumptuous rhetoric*, which always admits the *impotence of the medium*, that is the *images*, to represent the essence.”¹⁰ Orientalism fades, in the last analysis, into *rhetoric* (however sumptuous), as it uses the means of representation without being aware that it is naturally powerless to grasp essence. “More recent mysticism” however, “is of a more dismal and more painful kind. It rises with general, sensory representations into the depths of the essence, and struggles to take possession of it and to bring it before its consciousness.”¹¹ Hegel is referring in these lines to Böhme’s mysticism and, what is more, certain expressions in this passage (“sensory representations,” “depths of the essence”) recall the terminology used in the draft letter addressed to his Dutch student. The fundamental factor that distinguishes Jakob Böhme from Oriental mysticism is defined through the verb *to struggle*: Böhme uses sensory images in his attempt to understand essence, but the medium of the image, in this case, has a far more radical meaning. Jakob Böhme struggles with representations to force them to express that which has no form. This struggle is violent, painful, and compels the mystic to plunge into the depth of essence, with the aim of making this essence emerge into consciousness through the power of figurative language.

As with Oriental mysticism, Hegel concludes that sensory representations are inadequate for the content they seek to express. But in comparison with the former, Böhme’s mysticism brings into action an actual expressive *violence* that carries with it an inner struggle in the effort to grasp that which is trying to be expressed. In other words, the images are forced to fit what they are attempting to describe: but not even this straining can eliminate the root of the problem, which is the inadequacy of every image to represent essence.¹² In this sense, both Oriental mysticism and the mysticism of Böhme show their intrinsic inadequacy; but the element of violence, of straining, with which Böhme uses the images is a particular characteristic of his

⁹In the addition to paragraph 248 of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel alludes once again to the resemblance between Jakob Böhme and Oriental mysticism in relation to the imagery.

¹⁰*Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 338 (cf. GW 5, 468): “Er ist daher nur eine *prächtige Rhetorik*, welche immer die *Ohnmacht des Mittels*, nämlich der *Bilder*, bekennt, das Wesen darzustellen.”

¹¹*Ibid.*, 339 (cf. GW 5, 468–469): “Der neuere Mystizismus ist *trübseliger* und schmerzlicherer Art. Er steigt mit gemeinen, sinnlichen Vorstellungen in die Tiefen des Wesens und kämpft, sich desselben zu bemächtigen und es vor sein Bewußtsein zu bringen.”

¹²Cf. *ibid.*, 339 (cf. GW 5, 469): “Aber in der Form gemeiner *sinnlicher Vorstellung* läßt sich das Wesen nicht fassen. In welcher Vorstellung es auch gefaßt wird, so ist sie *ungenügend*. Sie ist nur mit *Gewalt* ihm angepaßt und muß so gewaltsam zerrissen werden. Es stellt sich nur der Kampf eines Inneren dar, das in sich gährt und sich nicht zu Tage und zur Klarheit fördern kann, seine Unfähigkeit schmerzlich fühlt und in Zuckungen und Krämpfen sich herumwälzt, welche zu keinem Ausschlag kommen können.”

approach, and this will later assume an increasing importance from Hegel's point of view.

The crux of the problem and the meeting point between Oriental and Böhman mysticism in this text is the relationship between the content that is intended to be expressed (the essence) and the medium used for the purpose (the sensory image).¹³ If we now consider the Berlin review of Humboldt's *On the Episode of the Mahabarata Known as Bhagavad-Gita* a clear development can be seen in the way Hegel deals with the same question. With regard to Humboldt's view on Oriental mysticism (with particular reference to the exercises practiced in *yoga*), Hegel writes that "Hr. v. H. [Herr von Humboldt] rightly does not think much of this representation and puts such overstretching on the same level as the excessively enthusiastic mysticism of other peoples and religions."¹⁴ After what was said about the renewed *enthusiasm* for mysticism between 1700 and 1800, the expression "excessively enthusiastic mysticism" (*schwärmerischer Mysticismus*) cannot pass unnoticed. Orientalism – and here in particular the doctrine of *yoga* – is once again placed on the same plain as a generic mystical-enthusiastic tendency typical of many other cultures and religions. In the following lines, however, Hegel introduces a crucial distinction through which this conception of mysticism is significantly circumscribed and specified. Hegel states, in fact, that it is not correct in the last analysis to liken *yoga* to the "mysticism of other peoples and religions," since mysticism has a "wealth of intellectual productions": peace of mind, often associated with a mystical state, can in fact contain in itself a movement of *evolution*, of elaboration of the object under investigation, such as to produce results that are "absolutely pure" on an intellectual level.¹⁵ It is not therefore a state of immobile silence, but one of inner *movement*, directed toward intellectual progress. The same cannot be claimed however for *yoga* which, according to Hegel, consists simply of abstract contemplation, devoid of content, based on the practice of silence and absolute immobility: "The Indian retreating of the soul into emptiness is instead intellectual debasement, which possibly does not even deserve the name of mysticism, and which cannot lead to the discovery of truths because it is empty."¹⁶ This is why *yoga* is not, in the last analysis, a form of mysticism but a complete leap into the void. It

¹³ This is certainly a crucial theme in Hegel's philosophy, which cannot be developed here except insofar as the specific case of Hegel's commentary on Böhme's writings. See therefore, for example, Ripanti (1987), 25.

¹⁴ *Werke* 16, 391 (cf. TWA 11, 161): "Hr. v. H. gibt mit Recht nicht viel auf diese Vorstellung und stellt solche Ueberspannungen auf gleiche Linie mit dem schwärmerischen Mysticismus anderer Völker und Religionen."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 391–392 (cf. TWA 11, 161): "Auch möchte ich wenigstens nach dieser Seite, nicht die Yoga mit dem Mysticismus anderer Völker und Religionen vergleichen, denn dieser ist reich an geistigen Produktionen, und oft höchst reinen, erhabenen und schönen, gewesen, da er in der äußerlich stillen Seele zugleich ein Ergehen derselben in sich und ein Entwickeln des reichen Gegenstandes, zu dem sie sich verhält, so wie ihrer Beziehungen auf derselben ist."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 392 (cf. TWA 11, 161): "Das indische Vereinsamen der Seele in die Leerheit ist vielmehr eine Verstupfung, die vielleicht selbst den Namen Mysticismus gar nicht verdient, und die auf keine Entdeckung von Wahrheiten führen kann, weil sie ohne Inhalt ist."

is the word *Leerheit* (emptiness), which recurs in the preface to the *Phenomenology*,¹⁷ that reveals an element of similarity, in Hegel's interpretation, between *yoga* and the pseudo-mysticism that he attacks in the 1807 work. This analogy is also confirmed by another passage in the same review, in which Hegel states that, if one preferred to use "a modern expression," one might define "this pure emptiness" as the "absolute immediacy of knowledge."¹⁸ *Unmittelbarkeit*, immediacy is – it will be remembered – the crucial term on which Hegel's criticism hinges in the *Phenomenology*. In other words, since contemplation in *yoga* has no *content* but urges those practicing it to make an immediate leap into the void (a void that is in reality *Verstumpfung*, intellectual debasement) it isn't worthy of the name mysticism.

So far as the absence of content is concerned, Hegel adds that the practice of the *yogi* leads to the search and the achievement of a profundity that really has no content.¹⁹ It will be remembered, however, that in the letter to van Ghert of July 29 1811, Hegel emphasized that there was a *speculative profundity* to the philosophical attempt carried out by Jakob Böhme. A substantial difference therefore emerges between Orientalism and Böhman mysticism: while the first ends up as a leap into an empty profundity, the second leads to the discovery of a profundity that is extraordinarily profound, whose richness is worth being carefully considered from a philosophical point of view.

The review of Humboldt's paper therefore brought to light several crucial differences between the approaches of Orientalism and that of Jakob Böhme, starting from the exact meaning of the word *mysticism*, which should not really be applied to teachings such as *yoga*, a practice that strongly resembles the pseudo-mystical tendencies criticized in the *Phenomenology*. Starting off from the association between Oriental and Böhman mysticism in the Jena fragments – followed by the first attempt to differentiate between the "pure beauty" of Orientalism and the more complex *painful* "new mysticism" of Böhme – Hegel's reasoning in the Berlin review showed, indirectly, the points of difference rather than the points of contact they had with each other. One single aspect, to which Hegel had drawn attention in the Jena fragment just considered, is also repeated in a later text: this is the use of imagery, which according to Hegel represents an essential feature of both Oriental mysticism and that of Böhme. In addition, at paragraph 248 of the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel in fact states that Böhme uses "representations that occur wildly in Orientalizing taste."²⁰ The wealth of imagery is also in this case a point that links the East to Jakob Böhme's West.

¹⁷The "emptiness of the Absolute" ("Leerheit des Absoluten") is "pure identity" ("die reine Identität"), or that "whiteness devoid of form" ("das formlose Weiße"), immobile and indeterminate, which Hegel criticizes repeatedly in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology* (cf. TWA 3, 51).

¹⁸*Werke* 16, 412 (cf. TWA 11, 181): "Nach modernen Ausdrücken ist die Bestimmtheit dieses Zustandes die absolute *Unmittelbarkeit* des Wissens zu nennen."

¹⁹*Werke* 16, 381 (cf. TWA 11, 151): "Yoga ist vielmehr eine Vertiefung *ohne allen Inhalt*".

²⁰*Werke* 7.1, 31 (cf. TWA 9, 30): "Vorstellungen, die wild im orientalisirenden Geschmack vorkommen".

In the Berlin review the distinction between the two types of mysticism is made *indirectly*, or rather it emerges as a result of his reflection on the characteristics of the doctrine of *yoga* and the impossibility of defining it in terms of *mysticism*. Böhme is named only once, but this single reference is of key importance: having stated that the depth to which the practice of *yoga* aims is absolutely empty, Hegel adds that the moment of abstraction, through which this profundity is reached, is in reality a crucial phase, namely the “moment of negation”. Hegel writes:

The process of abstraction through which deepening is achieved, is for itself the moment of negation, of sacrifice, and the further, profound thought should not be mistaken, that is that the activity of production is immediately linked to this negativity, the infinity (as by Böhme the act of qualifying (*Qualieren*) and of springing (*Quellen*) [are linked] to the torment (*Qual*)).²¹

Since *yoga* is an immediate approach that leads to a state of empty and immobile contemplation, the element of negativity – whose presence is an essential criterion for distinguishing mysticism of a speculative nature from pseudo-mysticism – appears in the context of this Indian doctrine as a point that is particularly weak. In other words: the immediacy of *yoga* carries with it, in exactly the same way as pseudo-mysticism, a weakening, a loss of importance for the “moment of negation.” Yet the inexhaustible productive activity, which is indissolubly linked to negation, is for Hegel a characteristic feature of the mysticism of Jakob Böhme: if understood in this context, the reference to Böhme’s terminology emerges in all its relevance. Böhme’s mysticism is in fact not only worthy of the very name *mysticism*, but represents for Hegel a form of mysticism based on a philosophically accurate use of the *medium*, of the movement of reflection-in-other, of speculation: in other words, it is not a leap into empty immediacy precisely because of the role played by the “moment of negation.”

Hegel doesn’t therefore establish an equivalence between Oriental and Böhman mysticism, but instead highlights an unbridgeable difference between the two. The moment of negation, in the way it is also expressed by Böhme through the wordplay *Qual-Quelle-Qualieren*,²² is instead an alternative to the immobility to which, in the last analysis, the doctrine of *yoga* is condemned. In Böhme’s lexicon, the assonance between the words *Qual* (torment), *Quelle* (source) and *Qualität* (quality) (from which comes the verb *qualieren*) indicates a profound link in their meaning, according to the rules of *Natursprache*, the language of Adam: torment – as we read in a famous passage in *Aurora* – is in fact a productive spring from which flow qualities,

²¹ Here I translate from TWA 11, 198, which presents a slightly different text from *Werke* 16, 429: “Das Abstrahieren, wodurch das Vertiefen wird, ist für sich das Moment der Negation, des Opfern, und der weitere tiefsinnige Gedanke ist nicht zu verkennen, daß an diese Negativität, die Unendlichkeit, unmittelbar die Tätigkeit des Produzierens geknüpft wird (wie bei Jakob Böhme an die Pein, *Qual* das *Qualieren* und *Quellen*).”

²² This is one of Böhme’s wordplays that Hegel most liked; we will return to its meaning in more detail later (cf. below, Chap. 3, Sect. 2.1.4).

or the action of qualifying.²³ Hegel is therefore referring to Böhme with the intention of exemplifying the importance of the action carried out by and through negativity – an action that finds an extremely limited application in the doctrine of *yoga* since there is no trace of negative productive force in the immobile contemplation of the *yogi*. Only in the use of imagery does Oriental mysticism show an infinite productive capacity: yet even images are destined to vanish into the ecstatic void in which this pseudo-mystical approach is bound to end. In the case of Böhme however – and this is a central factor in Hegel's interpretation – the infinite productivity of the negative does not relate only to the creation of images (an aspect shared with Orientalism), but plays a much broader and more complex role. The productive energy of negativity represents, in Hegel's view, the speculative heart of Jakob Böhme's mysticism.

Already from the Jena period, Hegel shows a clear interest in the concept of negativity developed in Böhme's writings. In the next section it will be shown how two important Jena texts, namely Fragment 49 of the *Wastebook* and the unfinished fragment on the divine triangle (or triangle of triangles), indicate two clear attempts by Hegel to deal with this crucial problem of Böhme's philosophy, starting off from various words that are typical of Böhme's language. The reference to Böhme in his review of Humboldt's paper can, in this way, be placed in perspective: not only will the specificity of Böhme's mysticism in relation to other mystical and pseudo-mystical approaches become even more apparent, but it will be seen that this same specificity relates to the particular importance that Böhme gives to the moment of negativity.

1.2 The “Life Cycle of God”: Böhme's Use of Imagery in Fragment 49

Fragment 49, as the editors of a scrupulous French edition of the Jena *Wastebook* declare,²⁴ is one of the most peculiar texts in the whole collection handed down by Rosenkranz, in particular for the terminology used, which clearly originates from Böhme though he is never directly named. It is “une sorte d'explication avec Jacob Boehme.”²⁵ The text is not a commentary on Böhme's philosophy, nor does it seem to be based on any specific work of his, given that there are no specific quotes or references. Yet Hegel's discussion is woven around some of the most famous words

²³ Cf. in particular BS, vol. 1 (*Aurora*), ch. 1, 3: “Qualität ist die Beweglichkeit, Quallen oder Treiben eines Dinges, als da ist die Hitze, die brennet, verzehret und treibet alles, das in sie kommt, das nicht ihrer Eigenschaft ist.”

²⁴ *Notes et fragments*, 177. The editors' commentary on the fragment in question, though brief, is one of the best available interpretations on Hegel's relationship with Böhme's philosophy. I refer to the numeration used in GW and in *Notes et fragments* (in *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung* the same fragment is nr. 48, rather than 49).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 177–178 (my italics).

and expressions in Böhme's language: from *Grimm* (anger) to "Zorn Gottes" ("God's wrath"), to the notion of otherness as in *Anderssein*, Being-Other, applied to Lucifer and to the *fiery* quality of his fall. On a first inspection we might say that the fragment seems rather like a bold philosophical experiment that is inspired by various words typical of Böhme's language but placed in a context of reflection that is different from that of its origin. In other words, the reader has the impression of being in front of a page that is entirely Hegelian in its form, but composed using a Böhman vocabulary. In this sense the basic layout is not dissimilar to that of another important fragment of the Jena period, itself a philosophical experiment, which is often misunderstood and forgotten by critics precisely because of its unusual language (here too with obvious Böhman echoes), namely the fragment on the divine triangle.

In the view of the French commentary mentioned above, the apparently anomalous nature of this re-elaboration by Hegel, starting from its use of the language of Jakob Böhme, is itself proof of the authenticity of the fragment.²⁶ This, it is suggested, is in fact evidence of Hegel's early interest in the shoemaker, an interest that arose – it is recalled several times – through direct contact with the Romantic rediscovery of *Theosophia Revelata*. The anomaly of this passage from Hegel is a crucial element because it casts light on the nature of Hegel's first encounter with Böhme's philosophy, in particular in relation to the criteria with which Hegel first approaches the work of Jakob Böhme. These same criteria would undergo notable changes during the period from the Jena fragments up to the Berlin lectures in the *History of Philosophy*: for this reason the particular combination between language and structure of argument in this text constitutes (along with the fragment on the divine triangle) a *unicum* that would never be repeated. It is the result of a first attempt at tackling the language of Böhme's philosophy and is therefore an essential starting point for our study.

If we relate this text to the commentary by Rosenkranz in *Königsberger Literaturblatt*,²⁷ where he suggests that Hegel had intentionally contrasted his own approach to the interpretations given by Tieck and Novalis, it becomes clear that Hegel's relationship with the shoemaker's work begins as a reaction to the guidelines of the Romantic revival. Rosenkranz suggests that Hegel had already tried in Jena to present Böhme not only as a profound mystic but also, and above all, as a *philosopher*. In this sense Fragment 49 could be regarded as a document that marks a break point: Hegel intends to open up a new way of reading Böhme, an alternative way to the criteria shared by the Jena Romantics. Considering this text by Hegel in a wider context, we could also say that it is a first step toward an independent interpretation of Böhme's philosophy in comparison to the historical context set out in the first chapter of this work, and which sees Böhme's ideas penetrating nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie*.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., 178 et seq.

²⁷ In *Königsberger Literaturblatt* Rosenkranz presents the previously unpublished Jena fragments (see HL, 199). See also *Notes et fragments*, 180.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 179–181.

The decisive factor from which this process of breaking away from Romanticism begins is Hegel's particular use of Böhman language. Hegel's reasoning is carried out on the basis of Böhme's terminology, but without specific reference to the shoemaker's writings. With this text Hegel joins the debate over the revival of Böhme, and to do this he absorbs into his discussion a series of Böhman words taken in all probability from Romantic re-elaborations on the figure of the shoemaker. Once he had begun reading *Theosophia Revelata*, after 1811, a clear change can be detected in Hegel's approach to the language of Böhme. To understand the direction in which this evolution would move, certain specific examples from Fragment 49 must first of all be considered.

The discussion in the text revolves around two key poles: intuition (*Anschauung*) and science (*Wissenschaft*). Intuition – says Hegel – has to undergo a process of “scientific evolution” though which to reach the level of knowledge, in other words the level of the spirit (*Geist*). Knowledge therefore elaborates the rich and confused material of intuitions and from the very moment of intuition it constructs the transition to the “spiritual nature” (“geistige Natur”) of science.²⁹ The intuitions that have to be subjected to the process in question are presented in the first part of the text, where Hegel makes ample use of Böhme's vocabulary. The fragment opens with this image: “God, having become nature,” writes Hegel, “expanded in the sumptuousness and in the mute cycle of figurations,” and becoming aware of this expansion he became *furious* (*grimmig*).³⁰ The adjective *grimmig* is very frequent in Böhme's writings (in *Aurora* it mainly describes the Devil's attitude of opposition to God).³¹ On the relationship between God and the Devil, Hegel writes: “God's wrath upon himself in his otherness, the fallen Lucifer, fixed here, elevates himself against God, and his beauty makes him proud and arrogant.”³² The image of the Devil's separation from God, through which God passes on into his Being-Other, represents the central moment of the cycle of figurations that Hegel has described earlier; it is followed by the consummation of rage – in other words, the outburst of anger – that is generated from the clash between God and the Devil, and finally the defeat of evil, or the exhaustion of anger itself.³³

²⁹ Cf. *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 366 (cf. GW 5, 498).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 364 (cf. GW 5, 497): “Gott, zur Natur geworden, hat sich ausgebreitet in die Pracht und den stummen Kreislauf der Gestaltungen, wird sich der Expansion, der verlorenen Punctualität bewußt und ergrimmt darüber.”

³¹ I refer to the heading *grimmig/Grimmigkeit* in the brief glossary appendix to my Italian translation of *Aurora* (AuN, 230).

³² *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 365 (cf. GW 5, 497): “Der Zorn Gottes über sich selbst in seinem Anderssein, der gefallene Luzifer, hier fixiert, empört sich gegen Gott, und seine Schönheit macht ihn hoffärtig.”

³³ *Ibid.*, 365 (cf. GW 5, 497): “es ist der Zorn selbst, die Entzündung des Grimmes in ihm, der sich aufreißt und seine hoffärtige Pracht verzehrt. Die verzehrte Natur steigt in neuer idealer Gestalt als ein Schattenreich empor, das jenes erste Leben verloren hat, die Erscheinung ihres Geistes nach dem Tode ihres Lebens. Diese neue Gestalt ist aber die Überwindung des Bösen, das Ausgehaltenhaben in der Glut des Schmerzens im Mittelpunkte”. A detailed examination of this text would require much more space than is available here. We shall be returning at various times

Not only the image of the conflict between God and the Devil but also the lexicon used by Hegel to describe this clash seem to be inspired by Böhme; and yet, even though the text composed by Hegel immediately reveals an attempt to construct a discussion starting off with Böhman terminology, the individual elements (divine rage, the anger of Lucifer) are too generic to relate to any particular passage from Böhme. Furthermore, the discussion heads toward an unexpected conclusion: Hegel in fact interrupts the description of this divine process with a clean break, thus revealing the real center toward which the whole argument is gravitating: "Such myths, such intuitions are intuitions of *barbarity*."³⁴ It is necessary then to leave this state of barbarity and submit the intuitions of myth (a myth outlined in Böhman language!) to a process that makes them *absolute*. This process "is the science or the cognition, that such imagining-oneself-in-oneself, such life cycle of God, emerges from cognition itself".³⁵ The life cycle of God, namely the evolution that leads to the affirmation of divine rage against the rising up of the devil, must be elaborated in such a way that it becomes a source of knowledge. To do this it is necessary for a process of reflection to be established that leads to the awareness of that which the mythological image has intuitively transmitted. In this context Hegel uses the verb *sich-in-sich-hinein-Imaginieren* (to imagine-oneself-in-oneself) that emphasizes the element of the reflection of the Divine in itself, an element that often recurs in Böhme's writings.³⁶

There is a return now to *barbarity*, closely linked in this text to the way of understanding *intuition*. The imaginative language of the myth is *barbarous* because – as we have seen – it has to be filtered through a process of reflection that renders it *absolute*. In another fragment from the Jena years (no. 46) Hegel emphasizes once again the barbarous character of intuition, and in this case refers directly to the shoemaker: to halt, as Jakob Böhme does, at the level of intuition – declares Hegel in this brief text – is none other than *Barbarei*.³⁷ This is a statement of fundamental importance in the light of the way Hegel's interpretation of *Theosophia Revelata* developed: in these Jena texts Böhme is described as barbarous since he stops, remains stuck, at a description that is purely intuitive, imaginative, without subjecting the myths of intuition to the process described by Hegel in Fragment 49.³⁸ Hegel

in the next sections to the problem of the separation between God and the Devil which, according to Hegel, is the real speculative point of Böhme's philosophy.

³⁴ Ibid., 365 (cf. GW 5, 497): "Solche Mythen, solche Anschauungen sind die Anschauungen der *Barbarei*."

³⁵ GW 5, 498 (cf. *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 365): "Dieser ist die Wissenschaft oder das Erkennen, daß jenes sich in sich hinein Imaginiren, jener Lebenslauf Gottes, aus dem Erkennen selbst hervorgeht".

³⁶ On the role that Böhme ascribes to the imagination in the Divine, see Koyré (1929), 230. The same verb *sich-in-sich-hinein-imaginieren* reappears in the history of philosophy lectures that Hegel dedicates to Böhme.

³⁷ *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 363 (cf. GW 5, 496): "Bei der Anschauung [...], z. B. *Jakob Böhme's*, stehen bleiben, ist *Barbarei*".

³⁸ As to the presence of the word *Barbarei* in the Jena writings, and in particular in *System der Sittlichkeit*, see Bonsiepen (1977), 204.

recognizes nevertheless that Böhme's intuition is more profound than the faith of Jacobi – and this clarification is not surprising after what was said previously.³⁹

The term *Barbarei*, which is used unambiguously in both fragments considered, will assume a double meaning in the later writings, and especially in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Alongside the meaning just given, which would be substantially maintained with slight modifications (namely: Böhme is barbarous because he reasons from imagery), a second meaning would be developed in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: the *Barbarei* of Böhme would also be interpreted as an indication of the extraordinary power of his mystical vision, a power of enthusiasm capable of exercising a positive effect on thought when it encounters inflexibility. We will return later to this crucial extension of meaning, which is an important result of Hegel's reflection on Böhme's mysticism.

Limiting discussion for the moment to the Jena fragments mentioned above, it has been seen how the recurrence of the word *Barbarei* is proof of the continuity of Hegel's reasoning, centered on the problem of the role of imagery and in particular on the need to go beyond the intuitive level without stopping there, as Jakob Böhme did, according to Hegel during his time at Jena. Even though Böhme is not named in Fragment 49, the *Barbarei* of myths referred to in this piece seems to relate directly to Hegel's reference to Böhme's barbarity in Fragment 46. We can see, in this way, the evidence of a reflection on myths, on the intuitive language of Jakob Böhme during Hegel's Jena years; but these same *myths* are not reconstructed with precision: Hegel limits himself to outlining the phases of a divine life cycle which, while containing various elements traceable to the writings of Jakob Böhme, seem instead to be a re-elaboration by Hegel starting off from impressions of Böhme. In other words, the language of Böhme in these texts constitutes no more than a general preamble: the basic elements on which Hegel's later appreciation of the speculative profundity of the shoemaker is based haven't yet emerged.⁴⁰ As stated in the French commentary mentioned above, Hegel *evokes* one work, *Theosophia Revelata*, about which he has a wholly superficial knowledge around the years

³⁹ *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 363–364 (cf. GW 5, 496): “Böhme's Anschauung ist eine tiefere, als Jacobi'scher Glauben offenbart.” On the distinction between the intuition of Jacobi and that deeper intuition of Böhme, the editors of the French edition of the *Wastebook* (*Notes et fragments*, 172–173) comment: “Un aspect remarquablement original du Fragment 46, en regard des œuvres ultérieures, est la distinction qui y est opérée entre les tenants du savoir immédiat et la théosophie de J. Boehme. Loin assimiler l'intuition boehmienne aux formes contemporaines de refus du concept, Hegel la rapproche du savoir spéculatif. Sans doute, le *philosophus teutonicus* recourt-il, faute de culture philosophique, à un mode d'expression qui ‘installe la barbarie dans la Chose même’; du moins n'en élimine-t-il pas, comme fait la moderne *Schwärmerei*, le contenu spéculatif.”

⁴⁰ I agree with the editors of the French edition about the importance of emphasizing the generic nature of Böhme's terminology used in Fragment 49 and the fact that Hegel's reading would later concentrate on certain specific elements that are still absent here. But it should be pointed out here that among the elements mentioned it is not correct to include *Ungrund* beside the words *Grund* and *Abgrund*, as the French commentary does, since the word is absent in the passages that refer to Böhme (cf. *Notes et fragments*, 178). On the reasons for the absence of the word *Ungrund* see above, Chap. 2, [Appendix](#).

1804–1805.⁴¹ In the first fragments in which an interest in Jakob Böhme emerges, Hegel's attempt consists of an elaboration that starts off from various characteristic features of Böhme's mysticism, in particular the imaginative confusion of language and the idea of the separation between God and Devil. At the same time these elements, already present in the interpretations of the early Romantics, are interwoven by Hegel into a discussion that already tends toward an elaboration that is independent of the nineteenth-century context of Böhme's reception. The Jena fragments therefore show how Hegel's interest in the themes of Böhme's mysticism emerges without a deep understanding of the sources, as had happened with several of those readers of Böhme mentioned earlier. The method of argumentation used by Hegel in these early writings, namely the construction of an independent reasoning based on Böhme's themes and language, would turn out to be particularly fertile when an active interpretation of the writings came to be added to it.

The fragment we will be considering in the next paragraph represents a striking example in this respect: previously regarded by Rosenkranz as a failed experiment and rarely considered worthy of study even by modern critics, the fragment on the divine triangle contains the beginnings of certain intuitions on Böhme's mysticism that Hegel would develop over the years after his period in Jena.⁴²

1.3 *The Dialectic Vitality of the Divine Triangle*

According to Rosenkranz the writing of the fragment on the divine triangle must be considered within the context of rediscovery of Böhme's mysticism by the Romantics⁴³ and above all by Baader, author of an essay *Über das Pythagoreische Quadrat in der Natur* (*On the Pythagorean Square in Nature*), which might have inspired Hegel's fragment.⁴⁴ Hegel, it is suggested, therefore shared in the growing enthusiasm for the shoemaker through his writing of a short piece, left unfinished because – according to Rosenkranz – the author would have realized while he was writing it that the structure and language used were inadequate for the purpose of

⁴¹ *Notes et fragments*, 178–179.

⁴² It should be pointed out that in Rosenkranz's biography the fragment in question is dated to the years in Frankfurt; Hoffmeister, on the other hand, agreeing with the view of Haering, regards it as a typical product of the period spent in close contact with Schelling at Jena (cf. *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 473–474). The fragment was published for the first time by Rosenkranz in *Literaturhistorisches Taschenbuch*, 2 (1844), 158–164.

⁴³ It is significant that Rosenkranz describes Böhme as the “philosopher of the Romantic school” (cf. GW 5, 479: “Auch der Philosoph der romantischen Schule, Jacob Böhm, war mit seinem *Ternar* wieder zu Ehren gekommen.”)

⁴⁴ Cf. GW 5, 479 and HL, 101. Hegel could have drawn inspiration from the writings of Baader (1851–1869) for the brief mention of a fourth vertex to the eternal triangle at the center of the fragment. It is also notable that Rosenkranz relates Böhme's influence on this fragment with Hegel's interest in the medieval mystics (cf. HL, 102). As I argued in Chap. 1, Sect. 3.2., however, there is very little evidence of any contact with the mysticism of Eckhart.

producing a philosophical text. Following this line of interpretation we ought to conclude that Hegel's attempt at participating in the rediscovery of Böhme's themes and language by some of his contemporaries came to an end as soon as it had started: in other words, it is suggested that the failed project from which the fragment on the divine triangle remains, demonstrates Hegel's distance rather than his participation in the revival and assimilation of Böhme's mysticism. The particularity of the language that Hegel uses in this text – an imaginative language that brings to mind Fragment 49 – is therefore said to be proof of Hegel's interest in the mystic so admired by the Jena Romantics; at the same time it is put into context with the incompleteness of the piece, indicating, according to Rosenkranz, that Hegel was dissatisfied with Böhme's barbarity.

The criticism of the barbarous form of Böhme's exposition is certainly a crucial feature in Hegel's interpretation. But Rosenkranz does not place sufficient emphasis on a fundamental element in this argument: in the fragment in question, Hegel in all probability re-elaborates second-hand knowledge about Jakob Böhme. In other words, Hegel considers Böhme's themes and terminology as filtered through the Romantic reception, in a similar way to what happened in Fragment 49. Yet it is precisely this aspect, in my view, that makes the fragment in question particularly important. This text can in fact be interpreted as a first attempt by Hegel at assimilating certain aspects of Böhme's mysticism within his own area of investigation, starting off not from his own reading of the sources but from an interest in aspects of Böhme that had already been rediscovered and written about by other authors. If this line of interpretation is correct, the fragment on the divine triangle must not be considered as an incomprehensible text that is difficult to place within Hegel's body of works. The anomaly of the expressive form to which Rosenkranz refers can in fact be understood as a *conscious attempt* to tackle a language – that of Böhme – which he considered to be worthy of philosophical attention. The fact that the writing is unfinished therefore doesn't necessarily prove the failure of such an experiment, carried out in my view by Hegel in perfect awareness of the intrinsic limits of an elaboration based on Böhme's evocative power. It is in any event a *fruitful* experiment:⁴⁵ Hegel attempts indeed to focus on certain crucial points retraceable to Böhme's mysticism that he considers to be worthy of philosophical study. In doing this, not only does he already distance himself from the interpretations of his contemporaries, establishing the bases for an interpretation of his own, but he lets certain key points emerge that will guide him from there on in his study of Böhme's philosophy. The fragment on the divine triangle ought therefore to be read not as an experiment that failed and was abandoned, but as an unfinished draft that finds its execution and development in the interpretation of Böhme's mysticism provided in

⁴⁵ Rosenkranz uses a play on words (*furchtbar-fruchtbar*) in claiming that the fragment on the divine triangle is a *terrible* text – terribly confusing and almost 'out of place' among Hegel's writings – and at the same time *fruitful*. Yet Rosenkranz describes it as one of the first forms of system (cf. GW 5, 479 and HL, 101). Keeping a distance from Rosenkranz's interpretation, we could nevertheless note that this first form of system is born out of an experiment on the philosophical richness of Böhme's mysticism.

his later writings and above all in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Starting off from these considerations, the analysis of this fragment finds a specific place in the investigation at the center of this study: it is a matter of establishing what themes and which of Böhme's words aroused Hegel's interest in the context of the revival of enthusiasm for Böhme's mysticism referred to earlier. We shall see how these early intuitions by Hegel on the speculative wealth of Böhme's mysticism would develop after 1811–1812.

The fragment on the divine triangle contains various ideas, in a state that is still vague and confused, which would assume a central role in the later examination of the speculative depth of Böhme's philosophy. The general lines that clearly emerge in this fragment and which would play a part in guiding Hegel's reading of *Theosophia Revelata* can be summarized in this way: they concern the dialectical mobility of the Divine and in particular the key role of the transition to Being-Other, to negativity; this movement – a movement consisting of specific phases – is represented through the image of the triangle.

The divine triangle that provides the title of the fragment is not in reality a *simple* triangle, but a triangle that doubles and triples, or rather a triangle *in movement*, a “triangle of triangles”, an eternal triangle whose sides are themselves triangular.⁴⁶ The very use of this dominant image in the fragment has led Rosenkranz to suggest that the expressive form of this text is coarse, barbarous, as if the subtle influence of Böhme emerges as a ‘barbarization’ of Hegel's style. It is also interesting to note that Rosenkranz detects a “vigorous conflict between the wooden rigidity of the form and the vital dialectic of the content”:⁴⁷ this comment, that Rosenkranz relates to the passage from Hegel, repeats exactly one of the main criticisms that Hegel makes of the writings of Jakob Böhme. It is clearly seen therefore that the anomaly of this text resides, according to Rosenkranz, in the imbalance between form and content, an imbalance typical of Böhme's writing, but not (at least in these terms!) of Hegel. One might say that Hegel's reasoning is not only prompted by Böhme's evocative power, but that he even seems to descend to an expressive terrain as *barbarous* as that of Böhme in order to carry out his investigation.

It must therefore be asked what is the purpose of such an experiment by Hegel. The answer must be sought in that “dialectic vitality of content” which is also expressed thanks to – and not just despite – its coarseness of form. The complex relationship between form and content in Böhme's writings would become one of the key aspects of Hegel's interpretation in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. As already stated, Böhme's *Barbarei*, which in the Jena fragments considered earlier is understood mainly in the sense of inadequacy of expression, would later assume an additional connotation, becoming also synonymous with the *strength*, with the *excessive vitality* of Böhme's mysticism. The fragment on the divine tri-

⁴⁶ GW 5, 479 (cf. also *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 303): “Hegel's dialektischer Geist hatte an einem *einfachen* Dreieck nicht genug. Er construierte, das Leben der Idee auszudrücken, ein *Dreieck von Dreiecken*”.

⁴⁷ Ibid.: “[der] energische[] Konflikt der Hölzernheit der Form mit der Lebendigkeit der Dialektik des Inhalts.”

angle, in which Böhme is never named, can be interpreted as an investigation of the relationship – a relationship that gives life to a “energetic conflict”, or a conflict producing energy – between the rigidity of the form and the depth of the content.

At this point, let us consider in detail the use and significance of the image of the triangle.⁴⁸ As already indicated, it is a triangle observed in the act of a doubling and tripling itself. The first triangle considered by Hegel represents the “divinity with itself in reciprocal intuition and cognition”,⁴⁹ namely in a condition of perfect equilibrium, expressed by the reciprocity of cognition of, and with, itself, where knowledge enters and leaves the divinity like a ray of light that flows outward and returns to the source. In other words this triangle represents the idea of divinity, “in which the pure light of unity is the center”.⁵⁰ There is nothing outside the divinity – it relates only with itself. The second triangle represents the rupture of this equilibrium: the perfect self-referentiality of the first triangle is upset by an imbalance, because intuition, which left and made its return to the divinity (this is therefore self-intuition) is, so to speak, diverted along its path. The cause of this diversion is the appearance of Evil, with which the divinity now comes into relationship.⁵¹ The two triangles are not set side by side, but Hegel describes instead an evolution, a movement that leads from the first to the second and which from the initial divine unity develops the phase of separation. The triangles are not therefore understood as states closed within themselves but as moments in an ongoing transition. The dynamic nature of this representation is particularly clear in the case of the second triangle that constitutes the phase of separation: Hegel does not in fact describe it as a definite triangle but as the doubling and the encounter between two triangles, in a movement of perennial separation.⁵² It is the inner movement of the second triangle – as we read at the end of the fragment – that provides the basis for the formation of the third triangle, which represents the phase of return (*Rückkehr*) to divine unity.⁵³ The three phases, considered together in their ternary rhythms, give life to dialectic vitality: the complicated structure formed by the interaction of three triangles is justified by the very attempt to express through imagery a provisional outline of dialectic movement.

⁴⁸ In Hegel’s complex text the image of the triangle is accompanied by a wealth of symbolism that cannot be studied in detail here. My examination focuses exclusively on the dynamics of triangles, without taking into consideration, for example, the role of earth-water-air which nevertheless plays an important (though particularly enigmatic) role in Hegel’s reasoning.

⁴⁹ *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, 304–305 (cf. GW 5, 481): “In diesem *ersten*, das zugleich nur Eine Seite des absoluten ewigen Dreiecks ist, ist nur die Gottheit mit sich selbst in Wechselanschauung und Erkennen.”

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 304–305 (cf. GW 5, 481): “das reine Licht der Einheit [ist] die Mitte”.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 305 (cf. GW 5, 481): “In dem *zweiten* [Dreieck] ist Gottes Anschauung auf die eine Seite getreten. Er ist mit Bösem in Beziehung getreten”.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 305 (cf. GW 5, 481–482): “Dieses zweite Dreieck ist, als in der Trennung seiend, hiermit selbst ein *zweifaches* Dreieck”.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 305 (cf. GW 5, 482): “Aber durch das zweite Dreieck des zweiten hat sich das *dritte* unmittelbar gebildet, die *Rückkehr von allem in Gott selbst*”.

It therefore seems relevant that Hegel had drawn inspiration from Böhme for the elaboration of this first experiment on dialectic vitality. Even though it is not possible to trace any references to *Theosophia Revelata*, Hegel shows that he has chosen certain significant elements from the debate among the Romantics on Böhman mysticism. Firstly, one notes a point of continuity with Fragment 49: the burst of divine rage – or the transition into Being-Other in the Jena fragment (where the image of the fall of Lucifer is derived from Böhme) – finds expression in the fragment on the divine triangle in the figure of the second triangle, which represents the “entry into relationship with Evil”. In the same way that in Fragment 49 the clash between divine positivity and Luciferian negativity ends with the “defeat of Evil”, so does the third triangle gain a new equilibrium, overcoming the Evil that the second triangle had allowed to enter into the initial divine stillness. In the fragment on the divine triangle the insurgence of Evil is portrayed with the transition – a speculative doubling – from the first to the second triangle; the speculative origin of the separation is further expressed by the inner division of the second triangle, which takes the form of two triangles each reflected in the other. In both fragments Hegel therefore takes his inspiration from Böhme (in Fragment 49 the reference is explicit) so as to delineate a specific phase, namely the negative moment in which God is mirrored and clashes with his Other and in which divinity comes into relation with Evil.

Starting off from these Jena fragments Hegel shows he is concentrating an increasing amount of attention on this particular aspect of Böhme’s mysticism: the speculative relationship between God and Lucifer and the origin of Evil. It could also be suggested that Hegel’s reading of *Theosophia Revelata* was directed toward searching around this nucleus of thought in Böhme, for which one already detects a strong interest not yet backed up by an adequate understanding of the complex language of the mystical cobbler.

We have said that the notion of mysticism as speculation hinges on the dialectic of the Trinity, unlike the pseudo-mysticism attacked in the *Phenomenology*, which places the emphasis on the undifferentiated unity of the Absolute.⁵⁴ The dialectic of the “triangular pattern”⁵⁵ in the fragment on the divine triangle can be seen as an early attempt to develop the conception of dialectic movement starting from a Böhman form of religious and mystical terminology. It will be recalled that in a passage already quoted in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* relating to Proclus, Hegel uses the word *triad* to describe a movement subdivided into three phases called *remaining, proceeding, returning*.⁵⁶ In the 1825–1826 lecture course we read that this movement, which in reality consists of three ternary motions (just like the “triangle of triangles” in the fragment passed down by Rosenkranz), reveals “mystically (*auf eine mystische Weise*) the absolute cause of everything, the first

⁵⁴ Cf. above, Chap. 2, Sect. 3.2.

⁵⁵ GW 5, 482: “Auch noch in späteren Jahren bediente Hegel sich zuweilen des triangulären Schema’s.”

⁵⁶ V 8, 189.

substance.”⁵⁷ The three phases of the triad seem to reflect the same motion as the three triangles in the Jena fragment: the first triangle appears in a state of calm, the second introduces a sudden change with the arrival of Evil and the third represents the moment of return. The fragment on the divine triangle is therefore situated within the same research context that leads Hegel to reflect on a speculative kind of mysticism, based on the role of inner movement, on speculation construed as “reflecting oneself in complete alterity”. The Jena experiment on the dialectic vitality of the eternal triangle must therefore be placed in context with Hegel's investigation on the characteristics and the importance of mystical and speculative vitality. In this way the influence of Jakob Böhme's mystical thought (even though it is still a vague and indirect influence) becomes grafted onto the very roots of the process of elaborating the relationship between mysticism and speculation that had been earlier reconstructed. What will be lost from this first experiment is – as we have already said – the expressive typology, in other words the manner of using imagery derived from Böhme; what remains is the interest in the dialectic vitality that Hegel traces back to certain aspects of Böhme, firstly in the description of the speculative moment (the origin of Evil), through which the dialectic movement of the triangles *proceeds*, acquires a propulsive force. The texts written after Hegel's encounter with *Theosophia Revelata* show that Hegel's interpretation continues in its attempt to recognize in Böhme's imagery the features of a philosophical thought characterized by a remarkable speculative depth, seeking therefore to release the valuable content from the rigidity of its form – and releasing at the same time Hegel's early intuitions on the mysticism of Jakob Böhme from the formal rigidity of the fragment on the divine triangle.

2 Böhme in Hegel's Published Works

There is a marked imbalance when it comes to Böhme's presence in Hegel's writings: while there are only rare references to the mystical cobbler in the published works, his unpublished writings and especially his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicate ample space to Böhme's philosophy. The scarcity of references in published texts has led some critics to regard Böhme as wholly irrelevant from Hegel's point of view;⁵⁸ on the other hand his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* are astonishing for the wealth of details on Böhme's thought – details derived from a careful reading of the sources.

The aim of this section will be first of all to indicate a possible path through Hegel's interpretation of Jakob Böhme's mysticism, considering as much the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 189–190. It should also be noted that Halfwassen (1999), 77, highlighted the Neoplatonic echoes in the fragment on the divine triangle.

⁵⁸ There are no references to Böhme, for example, in the biographies of Pinkard (2000) and D'Hondt (1998). He is mentioned in the biography of Althaus (1992) but it is never made clear whether, and in what respect, Hegel was interested in his philosophy.

references in the published writings as the lengthy passages in unpublished writings that form part of a broader system of research. On the one hand, the presentation of Böhme's philosophy in the lectures can also shed light on the meaning of brief references to the shoemaker in the *Logic*, in the Berlin reviews (already discussed) and above all in the *Encyclopedia*, so as to identify a thread that draws together references that are only apparently fragmentary and secondary in importance.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the discreet but widespread presence of Böhme in the published writings can be interpreted as the tangible result of a long reflection by Hegel on Böhme's mysticism, a reflection that emerges in its profundity only in the lectures. In other words, the written material (i.e. the few references in the published writings) appears to be scarce in comparison to the oral material (the lectures prepared for students, in which Böhme turns out to be a philosopher of fundamental importance), and yet the one is essential to the other and both therefore have to be considered as integral parts of a single process of elaboration that began during the Jena years. The apparent imbalance between the oral part and the written part is, in any event, a central element in understanding the nature of Hegel's approach to the writings of Jakob Böhme, and it is from this observation that our study must begin. It has to be asked, therefore, why Hegel devoted so much space to discussing the philosophy of Böhme in his lectures without showing, at least seemingly, the same interest in any publication for a wider audience.

We will attempt to answer this question following two considerations. First, Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's mysticism has to be regarded as constantly *developing*, from Jena up to the last courses given in Berlin. From this point of view it is important therefore not only to place the texts naming Böhme in chronological order but also to study subsequent drafts of a particular text. The evolution of Hegel's reading leads directly to the second consideration, which relates to Hegel's approach to the writings of Böhme, an approach which in my view appears to a large extent to be *experimental*. The key factor is Hegel's reaction against the theological and pietist interpretations of Böhme's mysticism: from his point of view the shoemaker has to be regarded as a philosopher and not as a visionary mystic, nor as a prophet. Through his interpretation, Hegel therefore seeks to open up the field to a *philosophical* interpretation of *Theosophia Revelata*, and to do this he proceeds essentially by trial and error. From this viewpoint the lectures become a testing ground, as can be seen from the various later re-workings of one and the same teaching course (and this is true – as we shall see – for his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* as well as his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*). What emerges in the writings destined for publication can therefore be seen as the result of a line of reasoning that had also been pursued in front of students. In this sense the brief references in the *Encyclopedia* and in the *Logic* indicate only the solid points of a

⁵⁹ Schübler (1965), 47, has pointed out that the lectures can be used to throw light on the links between single passages in the *Logic* and the *Encyclopedia*. Yet he claims that the references in the published writings add nothing to the picture built by Hegel in the lectures: in my view, however, they are two levels of interpretation that are brought together for different purposes.

reflection that was explored more fully in the lecture hall and which can be reconstructed through the notes of the students.

First of all, it will be attempted to show that the references to Böhme in the writings prepared for publication are interconnected in a systematic line of reasoning, centered on various basic themes that Hegel chose with care from his reading of *Theosophia Revelata*. These are brief but extremely careful references, linked together by a precise line of reflection. Lastly, we will proceed to examine the passages relating to Böhme in the lectures, thereby looking inside the fabric that supports the passages previously considered.

2.1 *References in the Encyclopedia and in Logic, Or: What Is Alive and What Is Dead in Böhme's Philosophy*

After the Jena period, and especially after he had received a copy of Böhme's complete works, a new phase opens up for Hegel – one of slow emancipation from that magma of partial understandings on which the rediscovery of Böhme's mysticism by the Jena Romantics was based. Hegel's early brief writings on the shoemaker are also based on a general understanding of this kind (without forgetting however that Hegel's contact with Böhme's thought did not take place through the filter of theosophy and animal magnetism). The intuitions that guide Hegel's reasoning in Fragment 49 and in the fragment on the divine triangle become clearer, acquiring substance and depth, through a direct reading of the sources. I have already referred to the peculiarity of Hegel's contact with Böhme's mysticism. As has been pointed out several times, in Hegel's interpretation, and in particular in the passages from the *Logic* and from the *Encyclopedia* which will now be examined, it is relevant to consider not only what is present but what is *not* present. The references in the published texts reveal in the clearest manner the selective criteria employed by Hegel in his reading of Böhme's writings. It will be argued that this very *selective* intent clearly distinguishes Hegel's approach to the shoemaker's mysticism from that of other contemporary readers of *Theosophia Revelata*. References to Böhme in the *Logic* and in the *Encyclopedia* demonstrate this aspect of careful selection, which provides the basis on which Hegel's philosophical reading of Böhme's thought is established.

To reuse the expression that formed the title of a famous essay by Benedetto Croce on the philosophy of Hegel, one might say that Hegel's approach aims to distinguish between *what is alive and what is dead* in the thought of Jakob Böhme.⁶⁰ In other words, all that Hegel did not consider in his treatment of Böhme's philosophy (the possible link to Mesmer's mysticism or to pietism), together with those aspects that are briefly mentioned only to confirm their inadequacy in the context of a philosophical investigation (such as for example Böhme's debt to Paracelsus),

⁶⁰ Croce (1907).

represents *what is dead* in the shoemaker's approach to mysticism. These are elements that cannot, according to Hegel, form part of any project for the revival of Böhman thought – a project that he considers worthy of being implemented but which he intends to pursue from a strictly philosophical point of view. His disapproval of Böhme's word *Ungrund*, which was very popular among Hegel's contemporaries, from Schelling onward, must also be included in this context: considered as immediate indifference, *Ungrund* is deemed to be similar to other Romantic notions devoid of *speculative* depth; in this sense the notion of *Ungrund* as absolute immobility and indistinctness belongs, for Hegel, to that part of Böhme's philosophy that is dead, but which is wrongly considered by other readers as essential, and one of the parts most alive. A new philosophical interpretation of *Theosophia Revelata* must therefore recognize these dead elements – some coming from Böhme's own writing, others wrongly attributed to him from the popular interpretations we have considered – and cast them aside. The main effect of this selection would be to shift attention onto those aspects of Böhme's mystical philosophy that were philosophically relevant, in other words *that which is alive* and should as such be brought to light. The live aspects reveal the philosophical depth of Böhme's writings, and are worthy of interest.

A key element has already been mentioned: Böhme forms a part of Hegel's reflection on the link between mysticism and speculation, prompting Hegel to distinguish between true mysticism and pseudo-mysticism. The fundamental features that help to give form to Hegel's notion of mysticism as speculation – in the first place the idea of movement, accompanied by the stress toward the exoteric revelation of a hidden philosophical nucleus – are traced by Hegel in Neoplatonic philosophy, in the opposition of medieval mystics to the rigidity of Scholasticism, and lastly in the thought of the enthusiast Jakob Böhme. Speculative movement, expressed for example in Böhme's notion of judgment (*Urteil*), which Hegel considers particularly worthy of philosophical interest, represents one of the keystones of Böhme's reflection, part of the living core of his philosophy.

The originality of Hegel's reading of *Theosophia Revelata* thus emerges from a combining of aspects that are unsaid and those that are emphatically underlined, taking form along the subtle dividing line between what is interpreted as alive and what is condemned as dead. The study of passages in which Böhme is named by Hegel in his published writings enables us to take a first look at the criteria that guide this reading, starting off from the evaluation of what is present and what is conspicuously absent.

2.1.1 Böhme and Paracelsus

We can begin the study of Böhme in Hegel's published writings by noting an absence that has already been pointed out while discussing the correspondence that passed between Hegel and van Ghert: in the passages where Hegel names Böhme there is no reference to the mesmeric-magical context. Though the discussion in the *Encyclopedia* on mesmerism makes no reference to Jakob Böhme, Hegel does on

one occasion mention the relationship between Böhme and Paracelsus. The passage in question relates to the meaning of three Paracelsian elements – mercury, sulfur and salt (*Mercurius, Schwefel, Salz*) – to which is added a fourth element, earth (*Erde*). Hegel attributes to Paracelsus the doctrine according to which all bodies consist of these four elements:⁶¹ in this way Hegel's reconstruction joins together Paracelsus's theory of the three basic components (mercury, sulfur and salt) and the doctrine of the four elements (water, air, fire and earth – from which Hegel selects the last element), which is also taken from Paracelsus, but is of much older origin.⁶² Hegel seeks to show that in the context of such a theory inspired by Paracelsus, the words mercury, salt and sulfur mustn't be interpreted literally, as though they refer to the corresponding natural substances, but metaphorically. The conclusion of his reasoning reads:

If one understands this from a chemical point of view, then there are many bodies in which there is no mercury or sulfur. But the meaning of such statements is not that such materials would be present in reality: the higher meaning is rather that the real physicality has four moments. This should thus not be understood with regard to existence, otherwise one can attribute to Jacob Böhme and to others absurdity and lack of experience.⁶³

The link between Paracelsus and Böhme is therefore described with this figurative jargon, of alchemical origin. In favoring a metaphorical interpretation, or rather attributing a “higher meaning” to the alchemical words in question, Hegel refers specifically to the case of Jakob Böhme: in other words mercury, sulfur, salt and earth *must* be understood metaphorically, otherwise it would be necessary to ascribe

⁶¹ Hegel reformulates Paracelsus's theory in these terms: “Eine geschichtliche Bemerkung ist, daß *Paracelsus* gesagt hat, alle irdischen Körper bestehen aus vier Elementen, Mercurius, Schwefel, Salz und aus der jungfräulichen Erde, wie man auch vier Cardinal-tugenden hatte. Mercur ist die Metallität, als flüssige Sichselbstgleichheit, und entspricht dem Lichte; denn das Metall ist abstracte Materie. Der Schwefel ist das Starre, die Möglichkeit des Brennens; das Feuer ist ihm nichts Fremdes, sondern er ist die sich verzehrende Wirklichkeit desselben. Das Salz entspricht dem Wasser, dem Kometarischen, und sein Aufgelöstseyn ist das gleichgültige Reale, das Zerfallen des Feuers in Selbstständige. Die jungfräuliche Erde endlich ist die einfache Unschuld dieser Bewegung, das Subjekt, das die Vertilgung dieser Momente ist; unter jenem Ausdruck verstand man die abstrakte Irdischkeit, z. B. reine Kieselerde” (*Werke* 7.1, 157; cf. TWA 9, 133).

⁶² It should be pointed out that earlier in the Jena fragments on the philosophy of nature and of the spirit Hegel attributes generically the theory of the “jungfräuliche Erde” (the “virgin earth”, an expression that appears in the passage from the *Encyclopedia* referred to here) to the *Ancients* (cf. GW 6, 114. See also *ibid.*, 369: “Der Ausdruck *jungfräuliche Erde* stammt aus der jüdisch-christlichen Tradition der Antike. Hegel kann ihn bei Flavius Josephus oder auch Hesych oder aber bei Tertullian kennengelernt haben.”) In this respect see also the note in Hegel (1987), 295.

⁶³ *Werke* 7.1, 157 (cf. TWA 9, 133): “Nimmt man dieß chemisch, so giebt es viele Körper, wo sich kein Mercur oder Schwefel findet; der Sinn solcher Behauptungen ist aber nicht, daß diese Materien *realiter* vorhanden seyen: sondern der höhere Sinn ist, daß die reale Körperlichkeit vier Momente habe. Solches muß man also nicht nach der Existenz nehmen; sonst kann man Jacob Böhme und Andern Unsinn und Mangel an Erfahrung zuschreiben.” It is significant that in the same *Zusatz* Hegel accuses Schelling and Steffens of having given scientific credibility to Paracelsus's theory that the series of planets corresponds with a series of metals: in Hegel's view this is a groundless theory of alchemical origin.

“to Jakob Böhme and to others” a serious inexperience (in reality, not all bodies are made up of these elements) and therefore foolishness. In other words, the relationship between Paracelsus and Böhme is defined around a problem of interpretation, which we could formulate in this way: the words of Paracelsus can only be understood metaphorically unless we want to accuse him of having no common sense, dragging with him the mystic Jakob Böhme into this accusation, seeing that he also draws on the alchemical words mentioned. It can be seen then that Böhme’s use of the language of Paracelsus is presented as a problematic factor.

To get a more detailed picture of the relationship between Böhme and Paracelsus from Hegel’s point of view, we must look at his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*; thus we have a first example of the way in which the interpretation of Hegel operates on two levels, between references in his published works and the much broader comment in his lectures. First of all, another crucial element, from our point of view, is highlighted in the lectures devoted to Schelling: Hegel in fact criticizes those of his contemporaries who have re-proposed the use of figurative language in the field of *Naturphilosophie*, similar to the alchemical language of Jakob Böhme. Hegel cites, for example, Schelling’s use of the word *powers* (*Potenzen*) and the botanical terminology employed by Oken: the language in both cases is unsuited to conceptuality because it employs metaphorical images such as those that Böhme had taken from Paracelsus.⁶⁴

It is no coincidence that Hegel names Böhme almost as the indirect source of inspiration for the theories mentioned: we have seen in fact how Böhme’s linguistic themes and expressions had particular success in the field of *Naturphilosophie*. It follows then that, from Hegel’s point of view, a somewhat problematic aspect of Böhme’s thought had filtered into nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie*, namely his fondness for an imaginative terminology derived from alchemy. In the figurative language of several contemporary *Naturphilosophen* there thus emerged those links between Böhme and Paracelsus in relation to which, during the course on *History of Philosophy* of 1825, Hegel states that Böhme surely read theosophical and alchemical works, as is testified by the ‘barbaric’ expressions used in his writings.⁶⁵ It will be remembered that Hegel had already described Jakob Böhme’s mode of expression as *barbaric* in the Jena fragments, particularly in Fragment 49 in which the barbarity was compared with the attitude of someone who stops at the level of intuition. At this point, by constructing a path that leads from paragraph 280 of the *Encyclopedia* to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, a specific cause for

⁶⁴ *Werke* 15, 673–674 (cf. TWA 20, 445): “Diese Formen waren bei Schelling Potenzen; aber man hat auch, statt solcher mathematischen Formen oder des Typus von Gedanken, sinnliche Formen zum Grunde gelegt, wie Jacob Böhm Schwefel, Mercurius. Man hat so den Magnetismus, die Electricität und den Chemismus in der Natur als die drei Potenzen bestimmt; und man hat so beim Organismus z. B. die Reproduction den Chemismus, die Irritabilität die Electricität und die Sensibilität den Magnetismus genannt. Dieser Unfug, Formen, die aus einem Kreise der Natur genommen sind, auf einen anderen Kreis anzuwenden, ist weit gegangen; Oken nennt z. B. die Holzfasern Nerven, das Gehirn der Pflanze. Das ist Spiel der Analogie, aber um Gedanken ist es zu thun”.

⁶⁵ Cf. V 9, 79–80.

Böhme's barbarity emerges: the influence of the alchemical tradition, and Paracelsus in particular. With regard to Böhme's debt to Paracelsus, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, compiled by Michelet, it is stated that: "numerous passages in his writings prove that he read much, clearly mystical, theosophical and alchemical writings in particular, without doubt partly those by Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastus von Hohenheim." The text then continues with a definition of the philosophy of Paracelsus compared with that of Jakob Böhme. In comparison to Böhme, Paracelsus is a "philosopher of similar caliber, but actually more confused, and lacking the spiritual profundity of Böhme."⁶⁶ From Hegel's point of view, the substantial difference between Böhme and Paracelsus is represented by the profoundness of spirit⁶⁷ that gives depth to Böhme's speculation, but which is absent in Paracelsus's use of alchemical terminology. It will be remembered that Hegel regards profundity (*Tiefe*) to be an essential element of Böhme's philosophy: in Böhme's writings the same terms used by Paracelsus, such as for example *Salitter* and *Mercurius*, appear within a research context that is philosophically more complex, more *profound*. But since this is a language that is *barbarous*, unsuited to the expression of philosophical thought, Hegel claims that the influence of Paracelsus on Böhme is responsible for the linguistic confusion he detects in the shoemaker's writings.⁶⁸ In this sense the barbarity of alchemical and Paracelsian language weighs upon Böhme's philosophy, even though Hegel finds a profundity that marks the dividing line between the philosopher Böhme and the confused alchemist Paracelsus.⁶⁹

At paragraph 316 of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel returns to the theme of the role to be given to Paracelsus's three elements: sulfur, mercury and salt. Despite the lack of any direct reference to Böhme in this paragraph, the discussion seems to be connected to and consistent with what has been said so far about the relationship between the shoemaker and Paracelsus. At the same time one aspect mentioned only in passing is now examined in significant detail: it relates to the need to interpret alchemical terms in a metaphorical, non-literal manner. Hegel states first of all that the ancient theory of the four elements, like Paracelsus's new theory of the three elements, can be easily invalidated by the simple observation that not all natural

⁶⁶ *Werke* 15, 299–300 (cf. TWA 20, 94): "eine Menge Stellen in seinen Schriften beweisen, daß er viel gelesen hat, offenbar besonders mystische, theosophische und alchymistische Schriften, zum Theil wohl des Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastus von Hohenheim; – eines Philosophen ähnlichen Kalibers, aber eigentlich verworrener und ohne die Tiefe des Gemüths des Böhme."

⁶⁷ *Gemüt* is a word difficult to translate in English (see also below, Chap. 3, footnote 185). Cf. DW, *sub voce*.

⁶⁸ It is significant that Paracelsus's theory of *signatura rerum*, re-elaborated also by Jakob Böhme, is regarded by Hegel as empty, without any scientific basis: "die Physiognomik, vollends aber die Kranioskopie zu *Wissenschaften* erheben zu wollen, war einer der leersten Einfälle, noch leerer, als eine *signatura rerum*, wenn aus der Gestalt der Pflanzen ihre Heilkraft erkannt werden sollte" (*Werke* 7.2, 240). See also TWA 10, 192: On the notion of signs in Paracelsus, see Bianchi (1999), 183–203 (cf. the reference to Jakob Böhme at 193).

⁶⁹ For an analysis of the meaning of alchemical terms in the writings of Jakob Böhme, see AuN, ch. 4 (in particular 4.1 and 4.2) of my introduction.

bodies are actually formed on the basis of these principle elements. But the discussion continues in this way:

But the fact should not be misunderstood that these [*the Paracelsian elements*] were meant to contain and express, more essentially, conceptual determinations. Therefore one should rather admire the violent force with which the thought, which was not yet free, recognized and held firm its own determination and the universal meaning in such particular, sensory existences.⁷⁰

Paracelsus's principles can therefore be construed as conceptual determinations (*Begriffsbestimmungen*) expressed in an inappropriate form, in other words using names that refer in reality to tangible substances. But to express conceptual content starting off from such terminology – adds Hegel – requires an extraordinary *energy*: it is an almost violent operation (Hegel uses the word *Gewaltsamkeit*), through which the conceptual nucleus is made to adhere to a word incapable of carrying a concept for the very reason that it refers to a material, tangible element. The word – in this case the alchemical terms used by Paracelsus – is thus forced beyond its own expressive limits, and starting off from the confused lexicon of an alchemist it becomes possible to express a conceptual profundity. In this way it allows the communication of a concept through a lexicon formed by words that are not abstract but which relate to concrete substances.

Hegel is, in my view, thinking directly of Böhme's interpretation of the language of Paracelsus, even though Böhme isn't named. Evidence to support this proposition is provided by the parallel with a passage already quoted from the preface to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia*, in which Hegel states that the *Teutonic philosopher* attempted *with violence* to give a spiritual rendering to various words that originally indicate "natural things", such as for example sulfur or saltpeter.⁷¹ This doesn't just use the same alchemical language that Hegel is referring to at paragraph 316 of the *Encyclopedia*: the reference to the forceful violence with which Böhme makes use of Paracelsus's lexicon represents an immediate element of contact between the two texts, justifying the contention that Hegel is referring directly to Böhme when he expresses surprise at the forceful attempt to apply tangible language to the expression of concepts.

Here too, the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* enable us to complete the picture by adding important details. In the manuscript compiled by Hotho and relating to the course year 1823–1824 we read for example: "The forms which he uses are not determinations of thought, but rather on the one hand [they are] sensory: the sour, bitter, sweet, love, wrath, mercury, and very many such modes."⁷² Hegel's

⁷⁰ *Werke* 7.1, 271 (cf. also the different version of TWA 9, 222): "Es ist aber nicht zu verkennen, daß sie [*the Paracelsian elements*] viel wesentlicher die Begriffsbestimmungen enthalten und ausdrücken sollten. Es ist daher vielmehr die Gewaltsamkeit zu bewundern, mit welcher der Gedanke, der noch nicht frei war, in solchen sinnlichen besondern Existenzen nur seine eigene Bestimmung und die allgemeine Bedeutung erkannte und festhielt".

⁷¹ See above, Chap. 2, Sect. 2.3. Cf. TWA 8, 28–29.

⁷² Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133r: "Die Formen, die er gebraucht sind keine Gedankenbestimmungen[,] sondern einerseits sinnlich: das Herbe, Bittere, Süße, die Liebe, den Zorn, den Mercurius und eine

explanation for the use of such terms by the shoemaker reads: "In Böhme these sensory forms do not retain the specific meaning of the sensory, rather he uses them to express determinations of thought, through which the presentation appears violent, because these determinations can only bring to expression the peak of the thought."⁷³ It will be noted that it is a very similar formulation to that used in paragraph 316 of the *Encyclopedia*, beginning with the underlining of the violent element (*gewaltsam*) that characterizes the type of representation sparked off by this particular adaptation of sensory language to alchemy. It is through the forceful adaptation of Paracelsus's terminology that Böhme has laid the basis for that interpretative profundity from which Paracelsus is precluded. Böhme therefore subjects the confused language derived from Paracelsus to a process of 'spiritualization' that makes it possible to extend the original meanings of the words as far as enabling them to express questions of a conceptual nature. This, then, is a process of abstraction, but which Hegel describes as *violent*: the violence consists indeed of separating the name (for example *Schwefel*) from the thing to which it relates (the sulfur that is found in nature) and then giving it a new meaning. Alchemical language, for Hegel, certainly remains a barbarous language, in other words unsuited to philosophical speculation; but when used by Böhme, he finds in it an attempt to make alchemical words spiritual, abstract. One also notes that the adjective *barbarous* can in this way be given a second meaning: in Böhme's version, the language of Paracelsus was *barbarously* – i.e. violently, forcefully – reinterpreted.

To summarize, the passages from the *Encyclopedia* that allude to the relationship between Böhme and Paracelsus have shown on the one hand how alchemical language, for Hegel, is a *barbarous* element in Böhme's writings (where *barbarous* must be interpreted here as the inadequacy between the expressive form and what it is intended to express);⁷⁴ on the other hand, Böhme's particular use of this language is a crucial element in distinguishing between the profound philosophy of the shoemaker and the confusion and lack of profundity of the alchemist.

The reference to Böhme and Paracelsus with which we started out (in the *Zusatz*, or addendum, to paragraph 280) has provided the opportunity to take a first look at Hegel's interpretation of the language of Jakob Böhme, a complex theme to which we will return several times from different perspectives. Our study until now has

Menge solcher Weisen." Here I propose to focus solely on Paracelsus's influence on the language of Böhme. Later we will return more fully to Hegel's criticism of Böhme's linguistic *barbarity*.

⁷³ Ibid., fol. 133r-v: "Diese sinnlichen Formen behalten bei ihm nicht die eigenthümliche Bedeutung des Sinnlichen[,] sondern er gebraucht sie zum Ausdruck von Gedankenbestimmungen, wodurch die Darstellung gewaltsam erscheint, weil nur die Spitze des Gedankens diese Bestimmungen vermag auszudrücken." A margin note of the same manuscript sets out the problem of the metaphorical interpretation of the alchemical lexicon in original terms, using the concept of *symbol*: "Dieses Sinnliche, indem es soll der Ausdruck für Gedankenbestimmungen sein, behält nicht seine eigentliche Bedeutung, sondern wird zum Symbol" (ibid., fol. 133v).

⁷⁴ Bal has described the alchemical/astrological legacy in Böhme's language as *flotsam* that remains in the shoemaker's philosophy; Hegel would regard his philosophy as a mixture of modern and ancient (Renaissance and Medieval) elements onto which has been added the theoretical contribution of the Reformation (cf. Bal (1998), in particular 240–241).

been limited to the relationship between Böhme and the alchemical terminology originating from Paracelsus which, for Hegel, was both a point of difficulty (since alchemy uses a terminology unworthy of philosophical speculation), as well as an opportunity for him to consider a characteristic aspect of Böhme's language, namely the element of violence in the adaptation of words. In the earlier correspondence with van Ghert, Hegel dwelt upon the violent aspect of Böhme's philosophy: the violence is not limited however to the use of language, but extends to an aspect of radical importance in the shoemaker's thought, namely the conception of the negative. Various references in the *Encyclopedia*, along with the single reference in the *Logic*, make it possible once again to outline the problem.

2.1.2 Lucifer and the Negativity of Nature: The *Zusatz* to Paragraph 248 of the *Encyclopedia*

In an essay entitled *Hegel à Iéna*, Alexandre Koyré claims: "Il est fort possible, et même fort probable, que c'est la méditation de thèmes paracelsistes et boehmistes qui aide Hegel à prendre conscience du rôle de la négation, du *Non*."⁷⁵ Following this hypothesis, we shall now attempt to demonstrate that Böhme's presence in the *Encyclopedia* has to be considered in relation to Hegel's interest in Böhme's conception of the negative. As for Paracelsus, however, his influence appears to be limited to what was said above with regard to alchemical language: he doesn't seem to have had a significant influence on Hegel's reflection about the role of negation. Despite what Koyré states, it is therefore necessary in my view to make a clear distinction between themes concerning Paracelsus and those concerning Böhme – the distinction is, in any event, made by Hegel himself. Although, from Hegel's point of view, the alchemical vocabulary is the most barbarous part of Böhme's writings, in the passages we will now be considering Hegel looks directly at what he considers to be the part of Jakob Böhme's philosophy that is most alive: the conception of negativity.

The most important points from which to begin our study are two, namely the *Zusatz* to paragraph 248 and above all the key paragraph in the section devoted to the subjective spirit: this is paragraph 391 in the 1817 edition, paragraph 473 in the 1827 edition and paragraph 472 in the 1830 edition. It is particularly important in this case to consider the three editions of the *Encyclopedia* in parallel, since Hegel made significant changes to the paragraph in question – changes that appear as a direct consequence of the development of his thoughts around Böhme's mysticism, accompanied by a further study of the sources. Compared to the Jena texts, which indicate an interest in Böhme that is not supported by an adequate knowledge of Böhme's work, this paragraph clearly shows the effect of his reading of *Theosophia Revelata*. There is without doubt a change of radical importance.

If considered in the context of the evolutionary hypothesis referred to on several occasions, these two short texts appear extremely relevant in a study of Hegel's

⁷⁵ Koyré (1961), 149.

interpretation of the mysticism of Jakob Böhme: indeed they are so crucial as to overshadow a frequent criticism, according to which the scarcity of references to Böhme in the published texts demonstrates the lack of any real interest by Hegel in the shoemaker's philosophy. These two references alone not only provide evidence of Hegel's assiduous reading of Böhme's works, but are capable at the same time of showing in which direction Hegel's interpretation is moving, in other words in what way and for what purpose Hegel is interested in studying Böhme, and furthermore what emerges from this study (and why) in the texts destined for publication. They therefore open up a whole sphere of research.

The subject that connects these two short texts is, as already indicated, that of *negativity*. In the *Zusatz* to paragraph 248, Hegel refers to Böhme's conception of the role of Lucifer in the context of the definition of *nature*: this paragraph is situated in fact in the section introducing the central part of the *Encyclopedia*, devoted to *Naturphilosophie*. At first sight, even though the reference is not included in the body of the paragraph, its position, which places Böhme's Lucifer in his discussion of the way nature is conceived, seems peculiar. The *Zusatz* itself contains the reference to the "wildly Oriental" taste of Böhme's imagery that was discussed earlier. We must now give closer consideration to what are the Oriental images Hegel is referring to and what is their significance in the context of paragraph 248.

As I have already pointed out, Hegel is referring in particular to the figure of Lucifer as interpreted by Jakob Böhme. The additional text in fact reads: "Nature is the negative, because it is the negative of the Idea. Jacob Böhme says that God's first generated creature is Lucifer; [according to him] this luminous creature imagined itself in itself, and became evil. This is the moment of distinction, the otherness, held firm against the Son, who is the otherness in love."⁷⁶

Böhme's theory about the fall of Lucifer is mentioned in relation to the role of nature as the negative of the idea: *Naturphilosophie* in fact considers the Idea in its exteriority (*Äußerlichkeit*), i.e. in the "form of alterity", as a negation of itself.⁷⁷ Alterity (*Anderssein*) is an element that joins this conception of nature with Böhme's Lucifer as God's Other: it will be remembered, moreover, that in Fragment 49 of the *Jena Wastebook* Hegel had used Böhme's image of the "wrath of God on himself in his Being-Other", with reference to the fallen Lucifer.⁷⁸ In this passage Böhme's division between God and his Other specifically accompanies the transition of the Idea into the exteriority of nature: the juxtaposition thus seems to suggest that

⁷⁶ *Werke*, 7.1, 31 (cf. TWA 9, 30): "Die Natur ist das Negative, weil sie das Negative der Idee ist. Jacob Böhm sagt, Gottes erste Geburt sey Lucifer, dieses Lichtwesen habe sich in sich hineinimaginiert und sey böse geworden; das ist das Moment des Unterschiedes, das Andersseyn, festgehalten gegen den Sohn, der das Andersseyn in der Liebe ist."

⁷⁷ Paragraph 247 established the following: "Die Natur hat sich als die Idee in der Form des Andersseyns ergeben. Da die *Idee* so als das Negative ihrer selbst oder sich *äußerlich* ist, so ist die Natur nicht äußerlich nur relativ gegen diese Idee (und gegen die subjective Existenz derselben, den Geist), sondern die *Aeußerlichkeit* macht die Bestimmung aus, in welcher sie als Natur ist" (*Werke*, 7.1, 23; cf. TWA 9, 24).

⁷⁸ GW 5, 497: "Der Zorn Gottes über sich selbst in seinem Anderssein, der gefallene Lucifer". See above, Chap. 3, Sect. 1.2.

Böhme's image constitutes an example, a *mythological* representation (returning to the terminology in the Jena fragments), of the relationship between the Idea and its Negative in the terms in which Hegel intends to put the question. Lucifer, whose role as God's *first* creature is fundamental in Böhme's writing ("the first product of God is said to be Lucifer", recalls Hegel), is in fact considered by the author of the *Encyclopedia* as a portrayal of the "moment of distinction".

The fact that Lucifer is the first-born, whose fall is earlier and more radical than that of Adam,⁷⁹ makes him, according to Böhme, the quintessential opposite of the Divine; the same word *Teufel* (*devil*) – we read in chapter 14 of *Aurora* – contains within it, in the letters with which it is made, the history of the fall of this first creature and the conflict with God that is generated by it: according to Böhme, in fact, the sound *fel* recalls the German verb *fallen*, to fall.⁸⁰ For this reason the Devil is the mirror-opposite that God himself has generated: the "life cycle of God" – to use the language used in Fragment 49 – begins for Böhme with this head-on opposition between God and the Other that originated from him. In this perspective the creation of the angel Lucifer asserts his own importance in the generation of the Son – the Son is also an Other in relation to God, but the essence of his 'alterity' is love, not anger. The furious opposition between God and Lucifer, or the furious manner of alterity, is therefore seen as being earlier than the sharing of love between God and the Son.

The reference to this Böhman theory in the *Zusatz* to paragraph 248 is too vague to enable us to trace its exact source and establish with any certainty from which text Hegel might have taken the problem of the separation between God and the Devil, which represents one of the central aspects of Böhme's thought. But a notable change has taken place in comparison to the way Hegel was using Böhme's language in the Jena fragments. Though certain key terms seem to be taken from the Jena fragments on Böhme (in particular Lucifer as alterity, Being-Other), in this *Zusatz* Hegel doesn't specifically refer to divine wrath, nor to the fiery quality of his proud fall: the discourse seems, so to speak, more focused. The conclusion presents Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's imagery: Jakob Böhme represented through imagery (the conflict between God and his first creature) that which the first paragraphs of the second part of the *Encyclopedia* seek to communicate using a more adequate language (the relationship between the Idea and its negative).

We could therefore turn the problem around and use Hegel's conception of *negativity* in these paragraphs of *Naturphilosophie* to highlight those elements which, according to Hegel, characterize Böhme's portrayal of the God-Lucifer relationship and which he regards as points of contact with his theory of nature as negative. In other words, Hegel filters Böhme's conception of Lucifer through the perspective adopted in paragraph 245 et seq. of the *Encyclopedia*. Hegel therefore interprets

⁷⁹ Cf. Koyré (1929), 156 and 234.

⁸⁰ BS, vol. 1 (*Aurora*), ch. 14, 26: "Das Wort *Teu* hat seinen Ursprung von dem harten Pochen oder Tönen, und das Wort *Fel* hat seinen Ursprung von dem Falle: also heist nun Herr Lucifer *Teufel*, und nicht mehr Cherubin oder Seraphin." With regard to 'Böhman etymologies' see AuN, ch. 4. 1. of my introduction.

Böhme's Lucifer as the phase of transition into exteriority, into alterity, into the negative – in the same way that nature is the negative of the Idea, so too is Lucifer the negative of God. The two terms – on the one hand the idea and its negative, nature, and on the other hand God and his first creature – are strongly interrelated: this close interrelation between the two poles is fundamental for the purposes of Hegel's discourse. In *Aurora* – which, as we shall see, was one of the basic texts on which Hegel founded his knowledge of Böhme – it is written that God created Lucifer “from himself” and that the conflict between God and the rebel angel is in reality a battle of “God against God”, an opposition by God against a part of himself.⁸¹ The way in which Böhme construes the relationship between opposites is for Hegel one of the fundamental aspects of the shoemaker's philosophy.

The reference to Böhme in this *Zusatz* culminates in the lines immediately after those already quoted, which confirm the similarity between Hegel's theory of nature and Böhme's theory of Luciferian alterity. The text in fact continues in this way: “Such representations, which occur wildly in Orientalized fashion, have their foundation and their meaning in the negative nature of nature.”⁸² Böhme's division between God and the Other is therefore interpreted as an imaginative version of the negativity of nature, though correct in its meaning. In Böhme's theory, Hegel sees the beginnings of his own theory of nature as negative of the idea. In this way he identifies a powerful point of contact – a *precedent*: it is the first text we have considered in which this occurs in such a clear and definite manner. It must certainly not be forgotten, however, that the reference to Böhme doesn't appear in the body of the text but in the *Zusatz*. A consideration of the paragraph from the section on the *subjective spirit* may at this point provide the testing ground for verifying and further studying Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's conception of negativity outlined so far on the basis of a *Zusatz* to the main text.

2.1.3 The “Famous Question Regarding the Origin of Evil in the World”

The only direct reference to Böhme in the three editions of the *Encyclopedia* (apart from the references in the *Zusatz*) appears in a digression that follows the definition of practical feeling in the *Psychology* section of the part on subjective spirit.⁸³ This text must be considered, as already indicated, in the three editions of 1817, 1827 and 1830: it will be argued, in fact, that a comparative analysis of the three versions

⁸¹ Cf. BS, vol. 1 (*Aurora*), ch. 14, in particular ch. 14, 57: “Nun als Gott den Lucifer mit seinem Heer beschuf, da schuf Er ihn aus dieser freundlichen Gottheit aus sich selber, aus dem *Loco* des Himmels und dieser Welt; es war keine andere Materia darzu.” See also in this case Koyré (1929), in particular 159, in which the author poses the problem of the conflict between God and the Devil in these terms: “Comment [...] aurait-il pu combattre Lucifer qui est une partie de lui-même?”

⁸² *Werke* 7.1, 31–32 (cf. TWA, 9, 30): “Solche Vorstellungen, die wild im orientalisirenden Geschmack vorkommen, haben ihren Grund und ihre Bedeutung in der negativen Natur der Natur.”

⁸³ On the word *Gefühl* cf. Hegel (1978), vol. 1, cxxxiv.

enables us to highlight certain important modifications made by Hegel. These reflect an attempt to bring out certain crucial elements in Böhme's philosophy with which Hegel seeks a point of contact, a common ground, in the same way as already indicated in the *Zusatz* to paragraph 248. On that occasion Böhme's figure of Lucifer was identified with the theory of the negativity of nature; in the paragraph we will now be considering, Hegel uses certain words from Böhme as part of a reflection on the "famous question regarding the origin of evil in the world"⁸⁴ – a formulation that appears in all three editions. The main theme in the discourse is in fact the investigation on the origin of evil (*Übel*)⁸⁵ in the world, where *evil* means the gap, the divergence, between what *is* and what *ought to be*. In this sense, the evil is the awkwardness (*das Unangenehme*), the pain (*Schmerz*) that arises when there is a conflict between being and having to be.

In the three editions, the paragraph in question ends – or rather culminates – with the reference to Böhme. It will be seen that this final reference becomes gradually more and more important, so that in the last version the whole paragraph seems directed toward this 'Böhmian conclusion', which is set up with a clear series of references through the course of the text. In this way, Hegel brings Böhme into the heart of the problem he is considering, namely the origin of evil and pain: the reference to Böhme's lexicon is therefore not extraneous to the way the paragraph develops but interacts with it, and the variations made over the period of time between the first and last edition of the *Encyclopedia* must be seen as the result of this interaction.

Let us consider first of all the structure of the paragraph in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia*. To the "famous question regarding the origin of evil in the world", the 1817 edition gives the following reply and explanation:

The evil [*Übel*] is nothing other than the inadequacy of the *Being* to the *Ought to Be*. This 'ought to be' has many meanings, and since the chance *purposes* also have the form of the 'ought to be', infinitely many. With regard to these, evil is only the right that is exercised on the vanity and nullity of their imaginativeness. They themselves are already the evil; the fact that there are such and all other singularities that are inadequate to the Idea, lies in the necessary *indifference* of the concept toward the immediate Being, which facing it, inasmuch as it is its free actuality, and through it at the same time, is released to the free actuality, but in this way is related to it and determined as what *in itself* is nothingness – a contradiction, which is called evil.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Werke* 7.2, 364 (cf. TWA 10, 292): "Die berühmte Frage *nach dem Ursprunge des Uebels* in der Welt".

⁸⁵ The German language distinguishes between *übel* (evil in the sense of misfortune, calamity, suffering) and *böse* (malice).

⁸⁶ *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1817), in GW 13, 219: "Das Uebel ist nichts anders als die Unangemessenheit des *Seyns* zu dem *Sollen*. Dieses Sollen aber hat viele Bedeutungen, und da die zufälligen *Zwecke* gleichfalls die Form des Sollens haben, unendlich viele. In Ansehung ihrer ist das Uebel nur das Recht, das an der Eitelkeit und Nichtigkeit ihrer Einbildung ausgeübt wird. Sie selbst sind schon das Uebel; und daß es solche und alle andere der Idee unangemessene Einzelheiten giebt, liegt in der nothwendigen *Gleichgültigkeit* des Begriffs gegen das unmittelbare Seyn überhaupt, welches ihm, insofern er seine freye Wirklichkeit ist,

Evil is defined as the contradiction, the contrast between the many (indeed infinite) forms of the *Ought to Be* and the immediacy of *Being*, which is the free reality with which the *Ought to Be*, in its variety of meanings and aspects, comes into conflict in an attempt to find its own fulfillment. Hegel therefore continues by stating that the painful contrast between being and the *Ought to Be* pertains solely to the activity of life, and in particular to the vitality of the spirit; for this reason there is no pain in that which is dead: "In what is dead there is no evil nor pain, because the concept does not exist in it, or because in the inorganic nature it does not come to face its existence. Already in life and even more in spirit the differentiation is present."⁸⁷ This difference between organic life, which carries with it the possibility of pain, and inorganic nature, to which the concept is extraneous, leads to the conclusion that the existence of evil is founded on the free and active movement of living bodies. Starting off from this theoretical basis, Hegel defines the cardinal principles on which the possibility of evil depends, and to do this he takes his inspiration from Böhme's lexicon. Böhme is in fact named in the lines immediately after: "And this negativity, activity, I, freedom, are the principles of evil and of pain; – Jacob Böhme has grasped egoity as anguish and torment and as the source of nature and of the spirit".⁸⁸ Hegel constructs a precise conceptual chain: *negativity-activity-I-freedom* (*Negativität-Thätigkeit-Ich-Freiheit*). These are the supporting pillars of the notion of *evil* outlined here. To summarize Hegel's discourse, the terms appear to be mutually connected according to this structure: the reality of *being* represents a negative limit for the free expression of *duty*; the conflict between these two levels belongs solely to the sphere of the living: the vitality, the actual activity of living bodies is essential for the sensation of pain to emerge. But Hegel introduces a new element, namely the *I* (*Ich*), which leads directly to Böhme's reference: from *Ich* he passes to the word *Ichheit*, a word dear to the German mystical tradition and often used by Böhme.⁸⁹ Jakob Böhme – states Hegel – has interpreted the *I* as pain, torment, but also as the source of nature and of the spirit. As we can see, once again there is the play on words between *Qual* and *Quelle*, to which Hegel refers in a pas-

gegenüber, und durch ihn gleichfalls zur freyen Wirklichkeit entlassen ist, aber eben so auf ihn bezogen und als das *an sich* Nichtige bestimmt ist; – ein Widerspruch, der das Uebel heißt."

⁸⁷ Ibid.: "Im Todten ist kein Uebel noch Schmerz, weil der Begriff nicht in ihm existirt, oder weil er in der unorganischen Natur seinem Daseyn nicht gegenüber tritt. Im Leben schon und noch mehr im Geiste ist diese Unterscheidung vorhanden". I follow George di Giovanni in translating *Dasein* as *existence* (see George di Giovanni's *Translator's Note* in Hegel (2010), lxviii–lxix). The most common choice in Hegelian translation and secondary literature in English would be 'determinate being' (see most recently Magee (2010), 71; but see the critique of this choice in *Encyclopedia Logic*, xxxvi–xxxvii, where the translators render it as *thereness*).

⁸⁸ Ibid.: "und diese Negativität, Thätigkeit, Ich, die Freyheit, sind die Principien des Uebels und des Schmerzens; – Jacob Böhm hat die *Ichheit* als die Pein und *Qual* und als die *Quelle* der Natur und des Geistes gefaßt."

⁸⁹ Cf. DW, *sub voce*, where there is a reconstruction of the use of the word *Ichheit* starting with the text of the *Theologia deutsch*, in which the term is to be construed in the sense of "empfindung und betonung des eigenen ich, egoismus." Schiebeler (Böhme (1831–1846), vol. 1, vi), includes *Ichheit* in the list of most typical terms in Böhme's language. The word is indeed to be found in many of his writings, such as for example *De signatura rerum* (cf. ch. 12).

sage quoted earlier from the Berlin review of Humboldt's paper on the *Bhagavad-Gita*: in that case the connection, suggested by the Adamic language, between the words *torment* and *source*, was recalled as part of a discussion on the productive activity of negativity.⁹⁰ In 1817 Hegel is already using Böhme's same play on words: in the passage in question, the discussion in which the example taken from Böhme's lexicon is quoted is based on the words *negativity* and *activity*, to which are added the elements of *I* and *freedom*. As if to say: Böhme expresses with the help of a language game the question that Hegel has attempted to outline in the previous lines: the negativity of pain (torment) is linked to generative activity, to life (the image of the source). This paragraph from the 1817 *Encyclopedia* is therefore a significant precedent for understanding the reference to Böhme in the Berlin review.

Although it is difficult to identify the text from which Hegel might have taken the word *Ichheit*,⁹¹ the play on words between *Qual* and *Quelle* could derive from *Aurora*. The first chapter of *Aurora* in particular is devoted to an explanation of the vitality of nature, where Böhme states that the inner friction of each thing is responsible for the life of the thing itself.⁹² This description of the meaning of *quality*, interwoven with assonances (the recurrence of *qual/que* and of the *l* sound), is used as starting point for Hegel's re-elaboration in which the idea of the activity of the negative element (the friction between being and duty) is fundamental. But the conceptual chain *negativity-activity-I-freedom* reveals another source of inspiration: the figure of Böhme's Lucifer which already seems to have fascinated Hegel back in the Jena years (as in the fragment on the divine triangle). Lucifer's rising up against God is in fact, according to Jakob Böhme, the act through which the *I*, subjectivity, emerges for the first time.⁹³ Lucifer, who upsets the divine balance by declaring his excessive desire for freedom from the creator, thus establishes the original difference between himself and the other or, vice versa, between God and his Other. In other words, the figure of Lucifer in Böhme's interpretation encapsulates the principles of the conception of *evil* which Hegel has outlined: for this reason it represents an important source for Hegel's argument. The final reference therefore contains a complex series of links to the work of Böhme, and thus it appears more integrated and consistent in Hegel's discourse than might at first appear.

This proposition is confirmed by the comparison with the two later editions of the *Encyclopedia* in which the changes made to the passage in question provide even clearer evidence of contact with Böhme's philosophy and his lexicon. The 1827 edition contains an addition that is relevant to our investigation. Let us look again at the passage already considered in the 1817 edition:

The evil [*Übel*] is nothing other than the inadequacy of the *Being* to the *Ought to Be*. This 'ought to be' has many meanings, and since the chance *purposes* also have the form of the 'ought to be', infinitely many. With regard to these, evil is only the right that is exercised on

⁹⁰TWA 11, 198 (cf. *Werke* 16, 429).

⁹¹According to Bonsiepen and Grotzsch, Hegel could have taken the reference from *Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* (GW 13, 748).

⁹²See in particular BS, vol. 1 (*Aurora*), ch. 1.

⁹³Cf. below, Chap. 3, Sect. 3.2.

the vanity and nullity of their imaginativeness. They themselves are already the evil. The fact that there are such and all other singularities that are inadequate to the Idea, lies in the judgment of the concept in itself (living soul, spirit, reason etc.) and in the Being, and [it lies in] its *indifference* toward the immediate Being, which through this itself is released to the free actuality, yet still remains related to it, and while it is inadequate to it as being for itself, it is nothingness against it and thus in itself – a contradiction, which is called evil.⁹⁴

Hegel has introduced a reference to the term *Urteil*, which literally means *judgment*. The context in which the word is used suggests however that it has been given a meaning that is, so to speak, special: judgment, *Urteil*, is interpreted in the sense of *Ur-Teil*, i.e. *Ur-Teilung*, original division or partition.⁹⁵ This use of the word derives from the writings of Jakob Böhme.⁹⁶ In *Der Weg zu Christo* (*The Way to Christ*), for example, we read that every living thing “originates and awakens within itself its judgment [*Urtheil*]”, or the division between love and wrath, light and darkness.⁹⁷ Within every living being there is therefore a judgment in the sense of an original partition. Even more significant for our discussion is a passage from *Mysterium Magnum* in which *Urtheil* is used to refer to the separation between Good and Evil – or between God and Lucifer: *urtheilen* is in fact used as a synonym of *scheiden*, to *separate*.⁹⁸ The origin of evil is therefore *Ur-teil*, or rather *Ur-teilung*,

⁹⁴GW 19, 346–347: “Das Uebel ist nichts anders als die Unangemessenheit des *Seyns* zu dem *Sollen*. Dieses Sollen hat viele Bedeutungen, und da die zufälligen *Zwecke* gleichfalls die Form des Sollens haben, unendlich viele. In Ansehung ihrer ist das Uebel nur das Recht, das an der Eitelkeit und Nichtigkeit ihrer Einbildung ausgeübt wird. Sie selbst sind schon das Uebel. Daß es solche und alle andere der Idee unangemessene Einzelheiten gibt, liegt in dem Urtheil des Begriffs in sich (lebendige Seele, Geist, Vernunft u. s. f.) und in das Seyn, und in seiner *Gleichgültigkeit* gegen das *unmittelbare* Seyn überhaupt, welches durch ihn selbst zur freien Wirklichkeit entlassen, ebenso auf ihn bezogen bleibt, und als für sich seyend ihm nicht angemessen, gegen ihn und hiemit *an sich* das nichtige ist; – ein Widerspruch, der das Uebel heißt.”

⁹⁵The interpretation of judgment as originating partition is also found in Hölderlin, but this is a substantially different conception of *Urteil* compared with that of Hegel considered here (cf. below, Chap. 3, footnote 116). On the use of the term *Urteil* as *Ur-Teilung* in Hölderlin see Henrich (1991), 55–58 and Henrich (1992), 95 et seq., also Finelli (1996), 114–115 (for a general view of Hölderlin's role in developing Hegel's thought, see Henrich (1971), 9–40). On the influence of the interpretation of *Urteil* as originating partition, with particular reference to the language of Hölderlin, see Kurz (1975), 61.

⁹⁶With regard to the role of *judgment* in the *Encyclopedia*, and in particular in paragraph 568, see Muratori (2010). As for the use of the word *Urteil* in Böhme, see Schäublin (1963), 107 et seq., cited also by Kurz (1975). See also Schulte-Sasse (2004), 74. The influence of Böhme's use of this word is not however mentioned. For a brief but effective summary of Hegel's doctrine of judgment see Schick (2002), 203–224.

⁹⁷BS, vol. 4: *Vom übersinnlichen Leben*, para. 57: “So lasset nun Gott alle Dinge in freiem Willen stehen, auf daß die ewige Herrschaft nach Liebe und Zorn, nach Licht und Finsterniß offenbar und erkannt werde, und ein jedes Leben sein Urtheil in sich selber ursache und erwecke.” The same text speaks of *Endurtheil* (literally: final judgment) in the sense of final division between saints and condemned (para. 52).

⁹⁸BS, vol. 7: *Mysterium magnum, oder Erklärung über das erste Buch Mosis*, ch. 26, 55: “Das Ungründliche urtheilet dasjenige, das sich in Grund einführt, und scheidet das Gute, das sich in ein gutes *Ens* einführt in das Gute, als in die Göttliche Liebe; und das Böse (das sich hat in ein böses *Ens* geführt, und zu einem bösen Geiste und Willen in ein *Centrum* gesetzt und geformet) in seinem Grimm und Zorn.”

the original scission between God and his Other, following the etymology indicated by the *Natursprache* (or language of Adam) according to which *Ur-* is the prefix for *original* and *Teil* means *part*. *Natursprache* thus emerges from the words of the German language through sound links (as in the case of *Qual* and *Quelle*) or through a partition of the word in question (as with *Ur-Teil*, or *Teu-Fel*, as already mentioned) which allows not the real etymology but a completely new meaning to appear. It is therefore no coincidence that Hegel reuses Böhme's concept of *Ur-teil* in a context that seems to contain references to the figure of Lucifer as a representation of the activity of the negative.

In the 1830 edition, the Böhman provenance of the words under consideration – the conceptual chain *negativity-activity-I-freedom*, the words *Qual-Quelle-Pein*, to which *Urteil* was added in 1827 – become even clearer. Let us return to the passage in question and compare the differences:

The evil [*Übel*] is nothing other than the inadequacy of the *Being* to the *Ought to Be*. This 'ought to be' has many meanings, and since the chance *purposes* also have the form of the 'ought to be', infinitely many. With regard to these, evil is only the right that is performed onto the vanity and nullity of their imaginativeness. They themselves are already the evil. The finitude of life and of spirit enters in their judgment, in which they have the Other separated from them at the same time as their negative in themselves, and thus they are the contradiction, which is called evil.⁹⁹

The last sentence now seems completely reworked on the basis of Böhme's meaning of the word *Urteil*: we note in fact that *Urteil* is related not only to the concept of negative but also to a new formulation, absent in the previous versions, namely "abgesonderte[s] Andere" (literally "the separate Other", from *sondern*, to *separate*, whose prefix *ab* adds the idea of the movement of separation). From Böhme's point of view this Other which has been separated, cut away from the original nucleus, is Lucifer. Hegel has constructed in this way a terminological constellation that hinges on the concept of negativity, using Böhme's word *Urteil* and the expression "separate Other", which refers directly to Böhme's image of the creation and fall of Lucifer. In the next lines Hegel has also replaced the word *Thätigkeit*, activity, with *Subjektivität*, subjectivity:

In what is dead there is no evil nor pain, because the concept does not come to face its existence in inorganic nature, and does not remain at the same time its subject in the distinction. Already in life and even more in spirit this immanent differentiation is present, and in this way an 'Ought to Be' enters; and this negativity, subjectivity, I, freedom, are the principles of evil and of pain. Jacob Böhme has grasped egoity as torment and anguish and as the source of nature and of spirit.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹GW 20, 469–470: "Das Uebel ist nichts anders als die Unangemessenheit des *Seyns* zu dem *Sollen*. Dieses Sollen hat viele Bedeutungen, und da die zufälligen *Zwecke* gleichfalls die Form des Sollens haben, unendlich viele. In Ansehung ihrer ist das Uebel nur das Recht, das an der Eitelkeit und Nichtigkeit ihrer Einbildung ausgeübt wird. Sie selbst sind schon das Uebel; – Die Endlichkeit des Lebens und des Geistes fällt in ihr *Urtheil*, in welchem sie das von ihnen abgesonderte Andere zugleich als ihr Negatives in ihnen haben, so als der Widerspruch sind, der das Uebel heißt."

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 470: "Im Todten ist kein Uebel noch Schmerz, weil der Begriff in der unorganischen Natur seinem Daseyn nicht gegenüber tritt, und nicht in dem Unterschiede zugleich dessen Subjekt

This gives emphasis to the element of the *I* (Böhme's *Ichheit*), meaning the source of subjectivity. Here too Hegel seems to have been inspired by the interpretation of *Urteil* as *separating judgment* that distinguishes God from the Other, making the latter into the first creature endowed with an *I*, a subjective consciousness that desires to establish itself against its own creator, whom it perceives as an extraneous and different being. In its new structure the discourse on the origin of evil leads directly to the conclusion, where the reference to Böhme now forms the climax of the whole argument. The conception of *negativity* has in fact been progressively extended in line with Böhme's interpretation, introducing first the image of the *original partition* and then tying this to the figure of the Other that becomes separated. This clearly demonstrates that between 1817 and 1830 Hegel continued to reflect on the treatment of negativity in Böhme's writings; the later insertions and corrections to the paragraph under consideration draw attention to his desire to use various relevant terms from Böhme's vocabulary in order to build his answer to the question on the origin of evil. Compared to the references to Böhme in the Jena fragments, the difference is now in the way in which Hegel uses Böhme's words, making them actively interplay with the structure of the argument. On the basis of a careful selection of terminology, Hegel sets the basis for his reception of Böhme's philosophy. In this paragraph of the *Encyclopedia* Böhme assumes the guise of an interlocutor whose language is worthy of being revived and, above all, of being used in an active manner.

The reference to Böhme in the *Logic* constitutes another example of Hegel's eagerness to revive Böhme's concepts and terms: in this case it relates to the concept of *quality* or *qualification*, which Hegel seems to take from the vocabulary used in *Aurora* and which is related with the definition of *Qualität* given in the *Logic* itself. The two strong-points on which Hegel insists in his reuse of this concept of Böhme are the role of negativity and the idea of movement: Hegel's reception of the philosophy of Jakob Böhme is therefore characterized, from the *Logic* to the *Encyclopedia*, by a basic continuity of the main themes.¹⁰¹

2.1.4 The Movement of Böhme's Quality

Böhme is named only once in the *Logic*, in the section entitled *Quality* in the second chapter of part one (*The Doctrine of Being*). Here also, the reference to Böhme appears at the conclusion of the argument, and more precisely at the end of the note that follows Hegel's definition of *quality*. And once again, several changes have

bleibt. Im Leben schon und noch mehr im Geist ist diese immanente Unterscheidung vorhanden, und tritt hiemit ein Sollen ein; und diese Negativität, Subjektivität, Ich, die Freiheit, sind die Principien des Uebels und des Schmerzens. – Jacob Böhm hat die *Ichheit* als die *Pein* und *Qual* und als die *Quelle* der Natur und des Geistes gefaßt." Cf. also Hegel (1978), vol. 3, 243.

¹⁰¹ Even though chronologically the reference in the *Logic* of 1812 precedes those in the *Encyclopedia*, I begin with the latter so as to clarify immediately the way in which Böhme's theme of negativity has been taken up by Hegel, emphasizing also the continuity with the Jena fragments.

been made between the first (1812) and the second edition (the first revised volume would be published in 1832, after the author's death). The passage in question, in the 1812 version, is particularly interesting for our study since it is Hegel's first text containing a reference to Böhme after he had been given his copy of *Theosophia Revelata* from Holland. While in the Jena fragments – and particularly the fragment on the divine triangle – Böhme's language was used in a fairly generic manner as a source of inspiration, in this paragraph of the *Logic* Hegel includes a precise reference to *qualification* as used in the Böhman sense, constructing a parallel with his own way of understanding *quality* set out in the lines immediately before. In the 1832 edition, the space given to Böhme is reduced but Hegel outlines the characteristics of Böhme's *quality/qualification* even more exactly, though briefly: this provides further evidence of the fact that Hegel studied Böhme's work more closely from 1811 onward.

In 1812 Hegel was already drawing inspiration from a particular work by Böhme, namely *Aurora*; in the 1832 revision, the reference to Böhme's description of *quality* in *Aurora* becomes even more apparent. This is therefore chronologically the first reference by Hegel to Böhme in which it is possible to identify the source with some certainty – and this is no surprise, given that Hegel finally had access to the mystic's complete works. Let us first of all consider the passage in question in the 1812 edition:

The *Qualirung* or *Inqualirung* of a philosophy that goes into profundity, but into a turbid profundity, refers to the determination, inasmuch as it is in itself, but at the same time is an *Other* in itself; or [it refers] to the more proximate nature of the contradiction, as it is in the essence, insofar as it constitutes the inner nature of the quality and essentially its own movement in itself. *Qualierung* therefore means in that philosophy the movement of a determination in itself, insofar as in its negative nature (in its *Qual*, torment) it posits itself from another and anchors itself; it is generally the disquiet of itself with itself, by which it produces and maintains itself only in the struggle.¹⁰²

The name of Böhme is not spelt out (though it would be in 1832), but there is no doubt that in these lines Hegel is referring to the shoemaker's philosophy, which he describes as a "philosophy that goes into profundity, but into a turbid profundity": it will be remembered that the letter to van Ghert where Hegel emphasizes the *profundity* of the mystic Jakob Böhme dates from the year before the publication of the *Logic*.

The most important aspect of this reference is the way in which Hegel attempts to transport Böhme's *Qualierung* into his own reflection on the characteristics of *quality*, using the element of internal negativity as a bridge between his own conception of the relationship between quality and determination on the one hand, and

¹⁰² GW 11, 72: "Die *Qualirung* oder *Inqualirung* einer in die Tiefe, aber in eine trübe Tiefe gehenden Philosophie, bezieht sich auf die Bestimmtheit, insofern sie an sich, aber zugleich ein *Anderes* an sich ist; oder auf die nähere Natur des Gegensatzes, wie er im Wesen ist, insofern er die innere Natur der Qualität und wesentlich ihre Selbstbewegung in sich ausmacht. Die *Qualierung* bedeutet daher in jener Philosophie die Bewegung einer Bestimmtheit in ihr selbst, insofern sie in ihrer negativen Natur (in ihrer *Qual*) sich aus anderem setzt und befestigt, überhaupt die Unruhe ihrer an ihr selbst ist, nach der sie nur im Kampfe sich hervorbringt und erhält."

Jakob Böhme's notion of quality on the other.¹⁰³ In Hegel's words, Böhme's *qualification* refers to "the determination, inasmuch as it is in itself, but at the same time is an *Other* in itself"; in this way Hegel has transferred Böhme's discussion about quality onto different terrain, namely his own way of understanding quality as determination, thus creating a direct link with Böhme's qualification, and applying Böhme's vocabulary to his own argument.¹⁰⁴ In saying that qualification (*Qualierung*) "therefore means in that philosophy the movement of a determination in itself", Hegel is actually translating Böhme's jargon into his own philosophical language.

The relationship between determination and its *Other* provokes a movement: for this reason *Qualierung* appears to Hegel as "the movement of a determination in itself". Quality, in this sense, carries within itself a root of negativity, which in the last analysis is responsible for its generation and for the continuance of its activity. In the lexicon of Jakob Böhme, the goad within determination is torment, *Qual*, a word to which Hegel, as we have seen, frequently returns: torment defines in this case the inner state of unrest (*Unruhe*), indeed the condition of strife (*Kampf*) that characterizes determinacy – or, for Böhme, the process of qualification.

In Böhme's conception of qualification, Hegel is concerned essentially about the way in which the presence of the negative element is described: as a *Qual* within *Qual-ierung*, as a torment within qualification, following the line of *Natursprache*. The torment of negativity is responsible for the inner movement that is a feature of quality itself, a movement which is self-movement (*Selbstbewegung*) precisely because the source of motion is internal, implicit in the very definition of *quality* (written, in fact, into its name), and not external. The *Other* is in this case negation, negative nature, within the determination of quality, and it is clear that there exists a relationship with Böhme's theme of *Being-Other* to which Hegel refers in various passages already considered (beginning from the Jena fragments up to the *Zusatz* to paragraph 248 of the *Encyclopedia*). The problem of the role of the *Other* – the *Other* that provokes a vital opposition, generating movement (so that *Qual* is perceived within *Qualität*, in the same way as the position of Lucifer in relation to God) – is certainly one of the most important factors in Hegel's interpretation of the philosophy of Jakob Böhme.¹⁰⁵

It therefore seems as though Hegel is sealing his own description of *quality* with a reference to a Böhmeian conception, with which he feels a resonance, a common ground: with this reference to Böhme, Hegel seeks to draw the outline of a specific notion (the way of understanding *quality* and the action of *qualifying*), which in his view forms part of a profound philosophy that is yet concealed behind a turbid language. Here again – as in the *Encyclopedia* – Böhme is presented as a precedent in

¹⁰³ For a detailed consideration of Hegel's conception of *quality*, see for example Massolo (1945), 124.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Hegel's definition of *quality* in TWA 5, 118: "Die Bestimmtheit so für sich isoliert, als *seiende* Bestimmtheit, ist die *Qualität*, – ein ganz Einfaches, Unmittelbares."

¹⁰⁵ According to K. Bal, Hegel uses Böhme's *Begriffsdialektik* in the *Logic* expressed, in the reference we have cited, by the figure of the division from the Other (cf. Bal (1998), 236).

Hegel's reasoning. The precision with which Hegel has chosen a specific concept – that of *Qualierung/Inqualierung* – is significant.

The words *Qualierung/Inqualierung* frequently appear in *Aurora*. For example, in chapter 13, Böhme writes that there are two possible ways of *qualifying*, or two *Inqualierungen*: qualification in the light of the Son and the angry qualification of Lucifer. These are therefore actions carried out, not static conditions, so that Böhme uses the verb *ringen* (to *struggle*) in relation to them.¹⁰⁶ In this sense qualification is the choice to act for one of the two poles (the Son, Good) rather than for the other (Lucifer, Evil). From this use of the noun *Inqualierung* (and the verb *inqualieren*)¹⁰⁷ Hegel therefore obtains the element of movement: this is probably the reason why in the 1812 edition Hegel refers to Böhme's *Inqualierung*, where the emphasis falls on the act of qualifying, instead of using the word *Qualität*, which is also part of Böhme's lexicon.

The closest term of comparison for Hegel's discussion is Böhme's definition of *Qualität* in chapter 1 of *Aurora*. In the 1832 edition, Hegel reduces the reference to Böhme but adds a clear reference to the early chapters of *Aurora*:

The *Qualierung* or *Inqualierung* (an expression of Jakob Böhme's philosophy, a philosophy that goes into profundity, but into a turbid profundity) means the movement of a quality in itself (the sour, bitter, fiery quality, etc.), insofar as it posits and anchors itself from an other; it is generally the disquiet of itself with itself, by which it produces and maintains itself only in struggle.¹⁰⁸

As we can see, the theoretical center of the argument (*Qual*, negative nature, the Other, movement) is maintained, but Hegel has introduced a specific mention to *quality*, or rather to Böhme's *qualities*: *Aurora*, in fact, refers to various qualities – sour, bitter etc., as Hegel recalls – which interact with each other. In this new formulation, Hegel's passage seems to refer directly to what Böhme writes in chapter 1 of *Aurora*: "Quality is the mobility, springing or forcing of a thing".¹⁰⁹ The key to Böhme's concept of *Qualität* resides precisely in the movement, created by a situation of internal tension.

The word *Qualität*, as already recalled, contains within it the same sound-root as *Quelle* (source) and *Qual* (torment), and it is from this consonance that Böhme outlines in the pages of his first book the definition of *quality*, from which Hegel draws the elements we have considered. *Aurora* therefore provides the basis for Hegel's reconstruction. This reference is therefore based without doubt on a direct knowledge of the sources. From the language of Böhme's philosophy Hegel has

¹⁰⁶ Cf. BS, vol. 1 (*Aurora*), ch.13, 40 and, ch. 20, 19.

¹⁰⁷ In the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel refers to Böhme's verb *qualieren* (cf. TWA, vol. 8, 24).

¹⁰⁸ GW 21, 102: "Die *Qualierung* oder *Inqualierung*, ein Ausdruck der *Jacob-Böhmischen*, einer in die Tiefe aber in eine trübe Tiefe gehenden Philosophie, bedeutet die Bewegung einer *Qualität* (der sauren, herben, feurigen u.s.f.) in ihr selbst, insofern sie in ihrer negativen Natur (in ihrer *Qual*) sich aus anderem setzt und befestigt, überhaupt die Unruhe ihrer an ihr selbst ist, nach der sie nur im Kampfe sich hervorbringt und erhält." My translation, but compare Hegel (2010), 88.

¹⁰⁹ BS, vol. 1 (*Aurora*), ch. 1, 2: "Qualität ist die Beweglichkeit, Quallen oder Treiben eines Dinges".

selected a significant term – *Qualität* – whose imaginative etymology created by Böhme reveals a complex conceptual structure (the idea of movement, the role of negativity): Hegel includes Böhme's reference in this section of the *Logic* precisely because of this conceptual profundity. The main characteristic of Hegel's approach to the thinking of Jakob Böhme is already apparent *in nuce* in the way Hegel includes these references in his published works (considering also the passages in the *Encyclopedia* discussed in the previous paragraphs): it is now a question of bringing out from the turbid confusion of Böhme's writings certain concepts of particular depth, worthy of being revived in the context of a philosophical investigation. Hegel's reevaluation of Böhme's mysticism is based for this reason, as we have already suggested, on a selective intent.

Urteil and *Qualität* are the two fundamental examples on which we have focused attention. In both cases Hegel has constructed an albeit indirect parallel between the complex meaning that Böhme attributes to each of these terms (on the basis of *turbid* yet *profound* Adamic etymologies) and the way in which he intends to interpret them. On the basis of the references in the published writings we have been able to establish that the references to Böhme are included in both the *Encyclopedia* and the *Logic* in such a way as to emphasize the common ground of a shared investigation: in other words Böhme's ideas are presented as significant precedents for Hegel's speculation and Böhme's terminology is used as an important source of inspiration. Hegel's reception of the philosophy of Jakob Böhme is therefore pursued through the revival of various crucial terms of his language.

To support this proposition, we will end this part of our investigation with an interpretative hypothesis that goes beyond the study of explicit references to Böhme and his language with which we have been occupied until now. In relation only to the words *Urteil* and *Qualität* we will look at two passages in which Hegel uses these words in a clearly Böhman sense but without naming Böhme. The very fact that Böhme isn't named indicates how, in these passages, Hegel relates to Böhme's philosophy and language with an attitude of active interest that prompts him to appropriate elements he considers philosophically important. Here – as already indicated – we are taking a mere glimpse at an issue that would be worth a study in itself and cannot be fully investigated in these pages.¹¹⁰ The purpose of these final observations will simply be to suggest the possibility that Böhme's presence in the published writings extends beyond the few references we have noted, reinforcing the proposition that Hegel's interpretation is aimed at reviving and reevaluating Böhme's philosophy, starting off from his lexicon. This first look at Hegel's use of *Urteil* and *Qualität* is also a way of introducing an analysis of the lectures, in which Hegel seeks to reintroduce into philosophical language other Böhman terms that had been unjustly forgotten in the history of philosophy.

¹¹⁰There is still no proper study relating to the penetration of Böhme's terminology into Hegel's published writings. The question is certainly important, but here I can only put forward a hypothesis, which will be an outline of the essential aspects without claiming to be exhaustive: a mere starting point for a possible development of my study.

Insofar as *quality*, it has been seen how in the *Logic* there is the first reference to Böhme's *qualification* and to the wordplay *Qual-Quelle* which defines its meaning: showing that he regards it as one of the crucial elements in Böhme's philosophy, Hegel also makes later reference to it, from the *Encyclopedia* up to the Berlin review of the paper by Humboldt on the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In the *Logic* itself there is also a trace of the influence of Böhme's *Qualität*, where Hegel clarifies the problem of *becoming*. In the first note that follows the definition of *becoming* as "unity of being and nothing", we read: "Thus in God himself the quality, activity, creation, power etc., contains essentially the determination of the negative – they are a production of an *Other*."¹¹¹ It appears relevant that Hegel uses the word *Qualität* in this context, alongside the terms *Tätigkeit*, *Schöpfung*, *Macht* (activity, creation, power). The *quality* attributed to God is also in this case an act, a movement: it is indeed the process through which "an *Other*" emerges, a process of separation. God's creation of an *Other* – the moment in which God reveals his creative power – can then be understood as the expression of divine *quality*. It will be remembered that in the note on Böhme's *Qualierung/Inqualierung* Hegel put the emphasis precisely on the problem of the *Other*: the movement of *quality* – it was said – is a placing of oneself in the *Other*, from which an inner conflict is generated that makes quality (or rather the action of *qualifying*) an unstable, *restless*, moment.¹¹² Hegel therefore concluded by stating that quality is nourished by this inner conflict that is centered on the determination of the *negative*. The points of reference in this short passage therefore suggest a relationship with the definition of quality made by Böhme that Hegel would provide later in the text. It is also interesting to note that Hegel uses a similar terminology in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, at the point where he presents Böhme's "good wordplay".¹¹³ Hegel emphasizes the aspect of *Tätigkeit*, namely the vital activity of *Qualität* (Böhme also writes *Qualität* to underline the derivation from the word *quellen/quellen*, to *spurt/gush*). In this case Hegel also underlines the fact that *Qual* is the negativity inside *Qualität*: a negativity that separates, determines. Hegel's interpretation of *quality* as a vital movement that produces separations thus brings the discussion to the Böhman question that is most dear to Hegel, namely the way of understanding the speculative separation between God and Lucifer, the original partition (*Ur-Teil*). The word *Urteil* is perhaps the clearest and most significant example of the penetration of Böhme's language into Hegel's lexicon. Paragraph 166 of the *Encyclopedia* opens with this definition: "Judgment is the concept in its particularity, as the differentiating *relation* of its

¹¹¹ GW 21, 72: "So in Gott selbst enthält die Qualität, *Thätigkeit*, *Schöpfung*, *Macht* u.s.f. wesentlich die Bestimmung des Negativen, – sie sind ein Hervorbringen eines *Andern*."

¹¹² In this respect it should be pointed out that in the first part of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel defines the moment of *becoming* (*Werden*, the same moment to which the note from the *Logic* relates) as *Unruhe* (*unrest*), using the same term employed in relation to Böhme's *quality*. The key element is in fact the *movement*, which is the main characteristic that Hegel detects in Böhme's discussion on *quality* (cf. *Werke* 6, 175; TWA 8, 191).

¹¹³ Cf. V 9, 82. During the course of this page Hegel repeatedly interrupts Böhme's quote from *Von wahrer Gelassenheit*, para. 9.

moments".¹¹⁴ While it is not possible to go into detail about Hegel's conception of *judgment*, it should be noted that *separation* is the distinctive element. The reason why separation and judgment are so closely linked is explained in the lines that follow immediately after:

Commonly, when thinking about judgment, one has in mind primarily the *independence* of the extremes, of subject and predicate, that is that the first would be a thing or a determination for itself and also that the predicate would be a universal determination outside that [*the subject*], for instance in my head – and this is then brought together with the first [*the subject*] by me and so in this way it is judged. [...] The *etymological* meaning of *judgment* in our language is more profound and expresses the unity of the concept as the first and of its differentiation as the *original* partition, and this is what the judgment in truth is.¹¹⁵

Hegel contrasts the *common* use of the term *judgment*, according to which the two extremes of the discourse (subject and predicate) are conceived as autonomous, with the *true* meaning of the word, which must be searched out in the etymological profundity of the German language and according to which, writes Hegel, *Urteil* is derived from *Ur-Teilung*, "original partition".¹¹⁶

But in reality it is not from the profundity of etymology that Hegel obtains this explanation, but from another type of profundity – a profundity that is turbid, but rich in precious elements, in other words the philosophical language of Jakob Böhme. In terms of etymology, in fact, *Ur-Teil* has nothing to do with *Ur-Teilung* since *ur-* is not in this case the prefix that means *original*, *primitive*: *Urteil*, in the sense of *judgment*, is certainly not made from *ur-* and *Teil* (*part*), but has a completely different and entirely independent etymological history.¹¹⁷ In describing

¹¹⁴ *Werke* 6, 326 (cf. TWA 8, 316): "Das *Urtheil* ist der Begriff in seiner Besonderheit, als unterscheidende *Beziehung* seiner Momente".

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* (cf. TWA 8, 317): "Gewöhnlich denkt man beim *Urtheil* zuerst an die *Selbständigkeit* der Extreme, des Subjekts und Prädikats, daß jenes ein Ding oder eine Bestimmung für sich, und ebenso das Prädikat eine allgemeine Bestimmung außer jenem Subjekt, etwa in meinem Kopfe sei, – die dann von mir mit jener zusammengebracht, und hiermit geurtheilt werde. Indem jedoch die Kopula, ist, das Prädikat vom Subjekte aussagt, wird jenes äußerliche, subjektive *Subsumiren* wieder aufgehoben und das *Urtheil* als eine Bestimmung des *Gegenstandes* selbst genommen. – Die *etymologische* Bedeutung des *Urtheils* in unsrer Sprache ist tiefer und drückt die Einheit des Begriffs als das Erste, und dessen Unterscheidung als die *ursprüngliche* Theilung aus, was das *Urtheil* in Wahrheit ist." My translation, but cf. also *Encyclopedia Logic*, 243–244.

¹¹⁶ See also the reference to the same etymology of Hölderlin, and in particular *Urtheil und Seyn*: Henrich (1991), 56–57. The emphasis on the link between *Urteil/Urtheilung* and *Sein* in this text of Hölderlin leads however to a different use of the conception of judgment as original partition in comparison with that of Hegel referring to Böhme. Henrich (1991), 57, indeed condenses into these terms the relationship between judgment and being: "Es gibt zunächst die Etymologie von 'Urteil' aus der *Urtheilung* der intellektualen Anschauung und bezeichnet dann das Bewußtsein 'Ich bin ich' als paradigmatischen Fall solcher ursprünglichen Trennung. [...] Im zweiten Teil des Textes wird dann festgestellt, daß, was aller *Urtheilung* vorausliegt, weder als Identität noch als Ich angemessen bezeichnet ist. Es muß 'Sein' heißen und darf nur als intellektuale Anschauung gedacht werden."

¹¹⁷ DW distinguishes between "die *Urtheil*", or *judicium*, and "der *Urtheil*", whose meaning is built from the base *ur-* (this is in fact an "ursprünglicher, einfacher, zu grunde liegender bestandtheil, urbestandtheil", cf. DW, *sub voce*); this therefore produces a mixture between the verbs *urtheilen*

judgment as the original partition of the concept, Hegel is therefore relying on the meaning that Böhme had attributed to this term. According to Böhme's conception, used by Hegel in the passages of the *Encyclopedia* that we have quoted, *Urteil* is the separation between God and his Other, a separation that does not generate two independent extremes, with no mutual contact, but instead produces an active movement, a conflict. Jakob Böhme is the source from which this concept of *Urteil* originates; it is his profound language that has to be revived, that is capable of showing what *judgment* truly is.¹¹⁸

In discussing Böhme's *quality* as well as in reconstructing the original Böhman meaning of *judgment*, Hegel emphasizes the element of movement, of the transition into the negative, indirectly relating two terms that, in Böhme, do not seem to have such strong mutual links. From these brief references in the published texts we can therefore already sense certain fundamental aspects of Hegel's approach to the writings of Jakob Böhme: an approach that looks for evidence in Böhme's thought of a philosophical path that has to be re-explored. The lectures reveal the inner structure that supports and connects the passages we have considered from the *Encyclopedia* and from the *Logic*. In this way we arrive at the source of Hegel's interpretation of Jakob Böhme's mysticism – a mysticism of a *speculative* nature.

3 Böhme in the Lectures

To read Böhme and find one's way through the barbarous confusion of his thought – says Hegel in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* – “it is necessary to be familiar with the Idea”. Not “with his ideas”, as is suggested by the wording of the miscellany edition of these *Lectures* compiled by Michelet,¹¹⁹ but “with the Idea”, as can be read in the Dove manuscript and in the course for the year 1825–1826.¹²⁰ In the first case the term *idea* is understood in a generic sense, meaning *thought*, whereas in the second the use of the singular suggests a completely different context, where the word is used in the specific sense that it assumes in Hegel's philosophy. This enables us to consider more closely what has been said earlier, namely that Hegel approaches the reading of Böhme with a selective intent, proposing a deliberately *personal* interpretation, directed toward a specific aim: from the manuscripts mentioned it appears that his main interest is to re-explore the Idea in

(to judge) and *ertheilen* (to separate). Modern German uses the neutral voice (“das Urteil”) in the sense of *judgment*; the concept of *separation* remains however in the term *Entscheidung*, which means *decision* and contains the root of the verb *scheiden*, to separate.

¹¹⁸The term *Urteil* is also used in the sense of *doubling* elsewhere in the *Encyclopedia* – see for example: *Werke* 7.2, 153; TWA 10, 125.

¹¹⁹*Werke* 15, 300 (cf. TWA 20, 94): “Es ist uns wunderbar zu Muhte bei'm Lesen seiner Werke; und man muß mit seinen Ideen vertraut seyn, um in dieser höchst verworrenen Weise das Wahrhafte zu finden.”

¹²⁰Cf. V 9, 80. Cf. Dove (1825), 161. I would like to thank Klaus Vieweg for making available the still unpublished transcription of the Dove manuscript.

Böhme's mysticism. In this respect, the unpublished Hotho manuscript (1823–1824), already referred to, has a particular relevant formulation: “With regard to more exact mode of his exposition, it is certainly barbarous, even though he has the deepest interest in the Idea, he struggles on every side with its opposites. But speculative truth essentially requires the form of thought in order to grasp itself.”¹²¹ The key terms in his reasoning are now familiar: Böhme's manner of expression is barbarous, and yet what he is trying to communicate is nothing less than the “speculative truth”. Hegel in fact recognizes at the basis of Böhme's speculation “the deepest interest in the Idea”. This interest is linked, as we can see, to a particular approach that Hegel describes as a *struggle with opposites*. Böhme, as he is described by Hegel, seems then to make space in the profundity of the Idea with a warlike attitude at the center of which is the conflict with opposites.

We shall return a little later to this aspect relating to the connection between profundity and conflict. We note first of all that, according to Hegel's interpretation, Böhme seems to be caught up in an irresolvable *impasse*, since his philosophy appears stuck between inadequacy of expression and the speculative profundity of content. In the same manuscript cited we also read: “Therefore one must have closer knowledge of the Idea, in order to know what he wants.”¹²²

To allow what he calls “the interest in the Idea” to emerge from the confused profundity of the shoemaker's writings, Hegel now pursues various paths in interpreting Böhme's mysticism. But first of all we must return to the question that has already been raised several times – what, according to Hegel, is Böhme's *barbarity*? Or: what is the role of the barbarous representations used to express the speculative content? And above all: how does Hegel describe the relationship between these two terms – the expressive manner and what is trying to be expressed – in Böhme's philosophy? This is, so to speak, a preliminary question, but of crucial importance for clarifying the nature of Hegel's interpretation. Only from a careful study of this problem will it be possible to consider the way in which Hegel seeks to revive the speculative heart of Böhme's mysticism.

3.1 The Concept and Its Representation

The adjective *barbarous*, as we have seen, is applied to Böhme's language in various published writings, as well as in the correspondence and in the Jena fragments. The emphasis on the inadequate form of the content is without doubt one of the most notable features of Hegel's approach to the writings of Jakob Böhme and that

¹²¹ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133r: “Was die nähere Weise seiner [Böhme's] Darstellung betrifft so ist sie allerdings barbarisch, obgleich er im tiefsten Interesse der Idee steht, mit ihren Gegensätzen sich herum kämpft. Aber die speculative Wahrheit bedarf um sich selbst zu fassen wesentlich der Form des Gedankens.”

¹²² Ibid., fol. 133v: “Man muß daher die Idee näher kennen[,] um zu wissen[,] was er will.”

is why it is mentioned in every study on the subject.¹²³ But rarely is there any attempt to carry out a closer scrutiny of the problem, which goes beyond the simple statement from which we began, namely that the language of Böhme is not, according to Hegel, the appropriate language for communicating philosophical concepts.¹²⁴ This observation by Hegel highlights only the essential structure of a complex question that should be considered in detail.

From Hegel's point of view, Böhme's *Barbarei* is not just a limit, a negative element that troubles and confuses thought: while certainly problematic, it is at the same time a *constituent* element of his mystico-speculative philosophy. It must therefore be borne in mind first of all that Hegel identifies a profound, non-accidental, relationship between the speculative nucleus and its barbarous expression. For this very reason the *barbarity* cannot be regarded as symptomatic of any lack of consideration on Böhme's part.¹²⁵ On the contrary, we will attempt to demonstrate over the next few pages that this, for Hegel, was a deliberate, conscious *barbarity* and that for this reason he does not interpret Böhme's barbarous representations as a pure and simple impediment to expression of the speculative nucleus, but as an integral part of it. The basic problem for Hegel is precisely this symbiotic (so to speak) relationship with which he has to deal as a reader of Böhme.¹²⁶ The answer to it leads directly to the heart of a crucial question that we have already anticipated, namely the significance to be given to Hegel's appropriation of Böhme's ideas: this, in other words, will allow us to establish in what way Hegel considers Böhme's thought to be modern.

3.1.1 The Barbarity of the Enthusiast

We have seen how Hegel begins reasoning on Böhme's *Barbarei* as from the Jena fragments. To stop at the level of intuition (*Anschauung*), at the expressive manner of the *myth* – as it was stated in Fragment 49 of the Jena *Wastebok* – is a barbarity, and Jakob Böhme is an example of it. Alchemical language in particular, which

¹²³ O. Pöggeler, among others, stops at this level of investigation (Pöggeler (1999), 32).

¹²⁴ The argument of Sánchez de Murillo should be pointed out in this respect for its originality, according to which “[w]enn Hegel Böhme zwar den ‘ersten deutschen Philosophen’ nennt, ihn jedoch außerhalb der eigentlichen Philosophie, welche mit Cartesius anfangt, sein läßt und ihn als Barbar bezeichnet, so spricht er den Sachverhalt treffend aus. *Barbar bedeutet Fremder*” (Sánchez de Murillo (1986), 211). According to E.S. Haldane however: “The ‘barbarous form’ he [Hegel] forgave when he found that he could detect the sound thought below the unattractive surface” (Haldane (1897), 150).

¹²⁵ Cf. Wahl (1994), 125, where it is suggested that Hegel criticizes the character of Böhme's theories as being “scarcely thought out and as though barbarian”. Equally erroneous is the claim that “as from the *Phenomenology*, Hegel sees in Böhme's ideas only external representations” (ibid., 126). Hegel dwells instead – as already partly discussed – on the interiority, on the profundity of Böhme's ideas. Furthermore, Wahl does not make clear which passage in the *Phenomenology* he is referring to. As to the possibility of finding Böhman terms in the *Phenomenology*, see Bal (1998), cit., 236.

¹²⁶ In this respect cf. Harris (1997), 675.

Böhme often uses in his writings, is regarded by Hegel as a barbarous language since it is inadequate for philosophical discussion. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel compares Böhme to Plato because both “spoke mythologically”.¹²⁷ Böhme in particular used a mythological manner (in this case, through descriptions typical of the Christian religion) to express purely speculative content. Nevertheless, the representation of the Idea in mythological form, in Hegel’s judgment, qualifies as a *claim* that has to remain unsatisfied.¹²⁸ Hegel states it as follows:

But this form is not the suitable one for philosophy; the thought, which has itself as its subject matter, must also be subject matter to itself in the form of thought; it must have elevated itself to the form of thought, too. Plato’s mythical [mode of] expression, which some have held to be suitable for philosophy, is on the one hand naivety of philosophy, and on the other incapacity to express oneself in the pure modality of the thought.¹²⁹

Hegel once again underlines the fact that form and content must be mutually adequate in a philosophical discourse; consequently *myth* is not suitable for philosophy, despite what *some* have claimed. Hegel is referring in all probability to the debate on the value of Plato’s writings in which some of his contemporaries, including Tennemann, Schleiermacher and Brucker, had taken part.¹³⁰ The role of the Platonic myths was one of the key points of discussion: “the mythical anticipation of thought” theorized by Schleiermacher, for example, forms part of this picture.¹³¹ Hegel’s criticism must therefore be seen as a position taken in respect of the significance of myths in the context of Platonic doctrine. Besides, his position is very clear: the myth remains, on the one hand, a *naïve* philosophical form and, on the other, it represents the incapacity to express ourselves in the pure form of thought. The emphasis must be placed on the word *incapacity*. As if to say: we resort to myth when we want to communicate something we cannot say in another way. A few lines further on Hegel indeed cites Aristotle, and replies in this way to his attack in relation to the lack of seriousness in the Platonic myths: “it is not the form in which the thought lets itself be presented, only an inferior modality. This is true. Yet Plato surely had his good reasons.”¹³² The myth is certainly an inferior form for expressing philosophical content, but – and here Hegel distances himself from Aristotle’s

¹²⁷V 6, 262.

¹²⁸Ibid.: “Das Mythologische kann [...] auch Prätentation machen, eine Art und Weise des Philosophierens zu sein; es sei die Art, philosophische Ideen darzustellen.”

¹²⁹Ibid., 262: “Diese Form ist aber nicht die passende für die Philosophie; der Gedanke, der sich selbst zum Gegenstand hat, muß auch in der Form des Gedankens sich Gegenstand sein; er muß sich zu seiner Form des Gedankens auch erhoben haben. Der mythische Ausdruck bei Plato, den manche für passend für die Philosophie gehalten haben, ist einerseits Naivität der Philosophie, andererseits | das Unvermögen, auf die reine Weise des Gedankens sich auszudrücken.” I follow di Giovanni’s suggestion (in Hegel (2010), xxxvi) in translating *Gegenstand* as *subject matter* (distinguishing it from *Objekt, object*).

¹³⁰See Vigus (2009b), 101–106.

¹³¹Cf. Hirsch (1971), 5.

¹³²V 6, 262–263: “es ist dies nicht die Form, in der der Gedanke sich vortragen läßt, nur eine untergeordnete Weise. Das ist wahr. Jedoch Plato hatte gewiß seinen guten Grund.” The passage appears in a significantly different form in TWA 18, 109.

generalized criticism – Plato had his reasons for using it. The conclusion of his reasoning therefore seems surprising, and points to a specific question: what are these reasons that justify Plato’s recourse to myth? Or more generally: when and for what reasons can mythology be justly resorted to? Hegel has already given a partial answer: myth makes it possible to communicate something that cannot be said in another way – where incapacity isn’t simply the same as naivety and incompetence, but can also relate to the attempt to express a conceptual depth for which there is an intuition but no adequate language to allow it clearly to emerge. In this sense Plato’s myths and Böhme’s religious representations are attempts to give expression to a content that is important, that has to be revealed behind the inadequacy of the form.

This is therefore the first point to bear in mind: the mythological discourse is certainly inadequate as a means but is, so to speak, necessary in some cases. In other words, the myth can have a supporting function for a concept that cannot (at least for the time being) be communicated in another way. The image then sustains, transmits, the speculative content. As an instrument it is certainly limited in its possibilities, but it can offer a basis from which to begin to approach the formulation of a philosophical problem.¹³³

The use of imagery in Plato and Böhme has this very function. In the same lectures, Hegel argues in a similar manner in relation to the presence of imagery in the philosophy of Plotinus, who often uses sensory representations to describe concepts, referring to these as though they were physical substances. In this way Plotinus started off a process of exchange and of mutual contamination between concepts and representations: the latter being thrust into the “world of concepts”, whereas ideas are dragged into the “sphere of the sensory”. This way of using concepts – continues Hegel – is typical of *magic*. But that is not all: Plotinus has also been described as a *Schwärmer* on the basis of this use of imagery and concepts.¹³⁴

Thus we return to one of the main themes discussed in the central part of this work, namely the significance of *Schwärmerei* and its relationship with mysticism of a speculative nature. At this point a new element is added to the picture outlined so far, relating this time to language, the expressive manner of the *Schwärmer* (for which, it will be recalled, Hegel proposed a complete ‘rehabilitation’).

Plotinus pushes imagery as far as making it apply to concepts, and transforms concepts into imagery. Even the *Schwärmer* Jakob Böhme – as we read in the *Encyclopedia* with regard to Böhme’s interpretation of the language of Paracelsus – forces language in a similar manner: for Böhme (unlike Paracelsus) alchemical sub-

¹³³ For a further discussion on the role of representations according to Hegel (and their link with imagination) see Derrida (1972), 94–95.

¹³⁴ *Werke* 15, 42–43 (cf. TWA 19, 440–441): “seine Manier, überhaupt von Begriffen, geistigen Momenten als solchen so zu sprechen, als ob sie eigene Substanzen wären, – sinnliche Weisen, Weisen der Vorstellung in die Welt der Begriffe hineinzutragen: Theils auch Ideen in die Sphäre des Sinnlichen herabzuziehen, z. B. den Zusammenhang der Nothwendigkeit aller Dinge für die Magie gebraucht. Denn der Magier ist eben der, der gewissen Worten, Zeichen, sinnlichen, einzelnen, eine allgemeine Kraft beilegt, durch Gebete u.s.f. sie in das Allgemeine einzubilden bestrebt ist, – aber ein gegebenes Allgemeines, nicht an sich, seiner Natur nach; oder das Allgemeine des Gedankens hat sich noch nicht eine allgemeine Wirklichkeit gegeben.”

stances are in fact understood as concepts, so that the concept is transferred into an image, and the sensory substance is necessarily given a new meaning. In a passage already cited, Hegel referred indeed to the violence (*Gewaltsamkeit*) of Böhme's operation.

In the light of these remarks, let us now take a closer look at the way in which Hegel discusses the characteristics of Böhme's language in the pages devoted to him in the *History of Philosophy*. A crucial passage in this respect (absent in this form in the publication edited by Jaeschke and Garniron and in the 1823–1824 manuscript) reads:

If on the one hand it is coarse and barbarous, and it is unbearable to read him continuously and to keep hold of the thoughts (it is a constant swirl of qualities, spirits, angels), this rough mind nevertheless actually possesses indeed an extraordinary barbarous force in using actuality as concept. In the background is the most speculative thought, which, however, does not arrive at the form suitable to it. Systematic presentation is not to be expected from him, nor a truthful demonstration into singularities.¹³⁵

Notable here again is the presence of “speculative thought” (indeed of the “*most speculative* thought”) in the philosophy of Böhme; but at the same time a sequence of levels is established: speculative thought remains on a secondary level, as if hidden behind the inadequate form used to represent it, which stands instead in the foreground. This involves a particular effort for the reader, who has to recognize the speculative content beneath the barbarous expressive surface, without therefore being deceived by the crude aspect of the presentation.

We will return shortly to the interpretative commitment required of the reader of Böhme's writings, and in particular the way in which Hegel, as reader, deals with this problem. The most important element to be noted first of all in these lines is the following: the adjective *barbarous* has suddenly assumed a double meaning. On the one hand, Böhme writes in a “coarse and barbarous” manner, since he is using a terminology unsuited to philosophy, which makes the reader dizzy and confused. On the other, however, he possesses an “extraordinary barbarous force”, with the help of which he uses reality as though it were a concept.¹³⁶ This is a violent procedure similar to that which Hegel attributed to Plotinus: Böhme requires a tremendous power to bend reality (i.e. sensory substances) to an improper use, pushing it toward the attribution of a conceptual meaning. In the first case, therefore, *barbarous* is synonymous with *crude*, *coarse*; in the second however the barbarity is

¹³⁵ Ibid., 303 (cf. TWA 20, 97): “So roh und barbarisch es einer Seits ist, und so sehr man es nicht aushalten kann, anhaltend ihn zu lesen und die Gedanken festzuhalten (es geht immer der Kopf herum von Qualitäten, Geistern, Engeln): so hat dieß derbe Gemüth doch eigentlich in der That eine ungeheure barbarische Kraft, die Wirklichkeit als Begriff zu gebrauchen. Im Hintergrunde ist der spekulativste Gedanke, der aber nicht zu seiner ihm angemessenen Darstellung kommt. Man muß systematische Darstellung bei ihm nicht erwarten, noch wahrhafte Herüberführung in's Einzelne.”

¹³⁶ Note, incidentally, the similarity with one of the most famous expressions in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology*: “die ungeheure Macht des Negativen” (cf. TWA 3, 36).

directly linked to the force, the excessive energy with which Böhme uses terms that describe sensory objects as though they were conceptual expressions.¹³⁷

Hegel clearly emphasizes the fact that Böhme is straining the language in his attempt to communicate a concept through a terminology derived from the world of tangible things. This is certainly indicative of an *incapacity* on the part of Böhme (Böhme is incapable of expressing himself through concepts), and yet Hegel recognizes that the shoemaker, in his writings, is making a tremendous, extraordinary, forceful attempt – an attempt to mould a terminology of his own that is more suited to communicating the speculative foundation of his personal philosophy. The task seems impossible (how can reality be used as a concept?) and yet Böhme responds to this impossibility, and with a force that is barbarous – i.e. excessive, enormous. In the manuscript written by Hotho (1823–1824) we read: “But through the strength of his spirit he breaks up forms, since he possesses in the background the most profound speculation”.¹³⁸ Böhme breaks up pre-established forms thanks to the “strength of his spirit”; the reason why he exerts this pressure on the language (a pressure that is translated into a violent separation between concrete things and their usual meaning), is to be found in the fact that “he possesses in the background the most profound speculation”. The breaking of forms, and the mythological barbarity that derives from it, is therefore caused by the desire to give voice to the speculative nucleus, letting it finally emerge into the foreground. On more careful study it can therefore be seen that Hegel is not simply revealing the hiatus that stands out in the foreground – expressive barbarity – and that which slips into the background – the speculation – but also provides a careful explanation of this phenomenon: it is this very desire to bring out the speculative content that is the reason why Böhme, knowing no other suitable method for this situation, has created a particular language that is barbarous and at the same time forceful.

¹³⁷ It is interesting in this respect to note that Hegel places Böhme and Newton as mirror opposites in their way of elaborating concepts. Cf. *Werke* 15, 447 (cf. TWA 20, 231–232): “Dabei ist er nun ein so vollkommener Barbar an Begriffen, daß es ihm, wie einem anderen seiner Landsleute gegangen ist, der sich höchlich verwunderte, als er erfuhr, daß er in seinem ganzen Leben Prosa gesprochen hatte, indem er sich nicht bewußt, daß er so geschickt sei; – dies erfuhr Newton nie, wußte nicht, daß er Begriffe hatte und mit Begriffen zu thun hatte, während er mit physischen Dingen zu thun zu haben meinte: und stellte das höchste Gegentheil zu Böhm auf, der die sinnlichen Dinge als Begriffe handhabte, und durch die Stärke seines Gemüths sich ihrer Wirklichkeit vollkommen bemächtigte und sie unterjochte, statt dessen Newton die Begriffe wie sinnliche Dinge handhabte, und sie nahm, wie man Stein und Holz zu fassen pflegt.” While Böhme’s reasoning starts off from words that refer to tangible substances as though they were conceptual terms, Newton on the contrary treats concepts as though they were only tangible substances, i.e. with no awareness of their value. Hegel concludes that Newton is “perfectly barbarous”, a judgment that seems to follow exactly that expressed on Böhme. But in the case of Newton the word barbarous has a single meaning: it relates to the lack of awareness with which Newton confuses the purity of the concept with the concreteness of tangible materials. There is therefore no trace of the “extraordinary barbaric force” attributed to Böhme’s writing.

¹³⁸ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v: “Aber durch die Stärke seines Geistes bricht er die Formen, denn zum Hintergrunde hat er die tiefste Speculation”.

Returning to what Hegel stated in relation to Plato, we can say that this attempt at communication, based on the intuitive knowledge of a speculative depth, is the “good reason” that is hidden behind Böhme’s wild representations, or the reason that clarifies its existence. Through the use of imagery and through his personal linguistic creations, Böhme seeks to get *as close as possible* to expressing the basic concepts of his philosophy.¹³⁹

But mention has been made of the *impasse* underlying this communicative experiment. The friction between the impossibility of successfully completing the task and the wish (or the need) nevertheless to pursue the objective is – as we have seen – one of the central characteristics of *Schwärmerei*, which Hegel first discusses in *The Spirit of Christianity*, where the *Schwärmer* Christ attempts to heal the rift that scars the Judaic world, openly tempting his own destiny. We also later pointed out that movement represents a decisive element in Hegel’s reevaluation of excessive enthusiasm. Even where Böhme’s language is criticized, movement also plays a central role: Hegel in fact complains about the excessive mobility of Böhme’s terminology, so that the reader is unable to *hold firm* (*festhalten*, intended literally) his thoughts. The barbarous force of Böhme the *Schwärmer* is manifested in an extravagant use of imagery, which creates a kaleidoscopic effect, a circular movement in which the reader becomes lost. In particular, Hegel refers to the way in which Böhme structures the discourse around “qualities, angels and spirits”: the reference seems to be aimed in particular at *Aurora*, where Böhme sets out the doctrine of the seven qualities¹⁴⁰ and the seven spirits of God,¹⁴¹ dedicating plenty of space to the problem of the creation of three realms of angels. To this are also added the seven planets.¹⁴² This complex web, based on the repetition of the number 7, cannot be regarded as *Gedankenbestimmung* (determination of thought) – as we read in the *History of Philosophy* course of 1825–1826, in which Hegel also concludes that Böhme lacks the stability that only determination of mind can provide.¹⁴³ The proliferation of qualities, angels and planets, in accordance with a numerical proportion of almost cabalistic mould, creates in this way a structure that is mobile and confused, where both characteristics – mobility and confusion – are derived from the effort to achieve at last a reversal of planes, allowing speculation to emerge.

In the pages of *Theosophia Revelata*, according to Hegel, this reversal does not take place: the speculation remains hidden behind the linguistic barbarity. But it has to be noted that Hegel finds in Böhme’s writing a strong emphasis *toward* the expression of the speculative nucleus. In other words, the intention of the mystic to communicate the depth of speculation is a decisive factor. In this respect it is suggested in the manuscript of 1823–1824 that the use of representations leads to the

¹³⁹ Cf. *Werke* 15, 303 (cf. TWA 20, 97): “Zugleich aber, weil er diese Bewegung, dieß Wesen des Geistes in ihm selbst, so im Inneren auffaßt: so nähert sich die Bestimmung der Momente mehr der Form des Selbstbewußtseyns, dem Gestaltlosen, dem Begriffe.”

¹⁴⁰ In the texts after *Aurora* the list of qualities appears variously modified (cf. AuN, 86).

¹⁴¹ Cf. V 9, 279 et seq. which refers to several specific passages of *Aurora*.

¹⁴² V 9, 83. Cf. also TWA 20, 105.

¹⁴³ Cf. V 9, 83: “keine Gedankenbestimmung; dergleichen Festes findet man nicht bei ihm.”

feeling of a painful struggle, since Böhme is trying laboriously to bring together (*zusammenfassen*) components that inevitably tend to fall apart (*auseinander fallen*), creating a situation of permanent instability.¹⁴⁴ He seeks in fact to apply the concept to an image so as to be able to transmit it: but concept and barbarous representation cannot hold together, and are destined to separate (the second is in fact unsuitable to contain the first), thereby opening a communication gap between them.

But what characterizes Böhme's attitude – a barbarous and enthusiastic attitude – is the continual persistence of this tension between concept and representation, which generates a violent conflict, a genuinely "painful struggle".¹⁴⁵ In other words, the attempt to communicate the speculative content is kept alive, despite the inadequacy of the means used for the purpose; this very friction between the desire for expression and the failure to achieve its purpose means that the first impression of anyone reading Böhme is that of witnessing a battle in progress.

With the introduction of the problem of *conflict* in Böhme's writing we have reached one of the key points in Hegel's interpretation, from which various roads branch off. We will therefore proceed by returning to a theme already anticipated thanks to Hegel's letter to van Ghert of July 29 1811, in which Böhme was described as the "first German philosopher". This particular position of the shoemaker in the *History of Philosophy* must in fact be considered within the context already outlined, where I began with his remarks on the *barbarity* of the representations, and went on to focus on a dramatic struggle between concept and metaphor.

To summarize the path taken up to now, the passages from *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* have made it possible to clarify first of all the reasons, according to Hegel, that explain the *Barbarei* of Böhme, passing by way of a redefinition of the meaning of the same adjective *barbarisch*. On the one hand, the discussion of Böhme's barbarous language has highlighted a powerful link with the theme of the enthusiastic movement of the *Schwärmerei*;¹⁴⁶ on the other hand, the beginnings of a fundamental principle that Hegel applies in his reading of Böhme has emerged, namely the attempt to recognize speculation even through the impure filter of Böhme's mythological expression. Despite their inadequacy, the barbarous repre-

¹⁴⁴ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v: "Deswegen stellt sich sein Gemählde als ein schmerzhafter Kampf dar. Man hat das Gefühl des Ringens einer wilden rohen Austrengung [,] die das zusammenfassen will, was auseinander fällt."

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ For possible additional material in the discussion on *Barbarei* and *movement* see also the section in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicated to educational philosophy, in which it is stated that the main characteristic of the barbarian people must be found in the state of conflict and in the "unendliche Qual" ("infinite torment") that derives from it – where *Qual* is, as already discussed, one of the most significant terms that Hegel draws from the language of Böhme. Cf. for example *Werke* 15, 140 (cf. TWA 19, 532): "Es sind noch ungebildete Völker, aber tief an Herz und Gemüth bei barbarischer Dumpfheit; in diese ist dann das Princip des Geistes gelegt worden, und damit ist diese Qual, dieser Kampf des Geistes und des Natürlichen nothwendig gesetzt." This could therefore suggest the presence of a link, albeit indirect, between this discussion of the barbarian character of the Germanic peoples, where the emphasis falls upon their as yet undeveloped profundity of spirit, and the metaphoric barbarity of the uneducated but profound Jakob Böhme.

sentations (such as *qualities*, *angels*, *spirits*) are then bearers of a significant speculative meaning. Readers of Böhme should therefore, according to Hegel, take the following course: delving into the turbid profundity of Böhme's language, they should make a conscious selection, aimed at identifying that imagery whose barbarity conceals an attempt to express a speculative concept. The imaginative form, in many cases, doesn't just hide content that is philosophically significant, but often becomes a useful vehicle: think of the case of *Urteil*, where the 'false etymology' makes it possible to go beyond the main meaning of the word (*judgment*) to reach a further level of conceptual content (*separation*); or the play on assonances used to define *quality* as generative movement that uses a negative impulse within the quality itself (*Qual*).

Despite his criticism of the barbarous confusion of his writings, Hegel therefore shows he is using Böhme's language as a principal way of access to his philosophy. But the direction of Hegel's interpretation is now clear: it is to recover the speculative richness of Böhme's thought, making use of Böhme's representative language as a support, while recognizing its limits. In short, Hegel is showing that, in the case of the shoemaker, language and the content transmitted by it are linked together in a particularly profound manner. *Natursprache*, which Böhme calls his mother tongue,¹⁴⁷ is defined moreover by the profundity of this link.

It must be concluded that Hegel certainly doesn't completely reject Böhme's *Barbarei* as a sign of his incapacity to philosophize. Instead he establishes the basis for an ambitious interpretative project, which involves not only a phase of selection but also a phase, so to speak, of *translation*. Hegel attempts to translate the figurative language of Böhme into conceptual terms, arriving (at least in relation to certain important conceptual problems) at the destination that Böhme himself, according to Hegel, had hoped to reach without managing to do so, namely an adequate and philosophically rigorous expression of the speculative profundity possessed by him. Böhme – we read in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* – had a lucid perception of the need to present his thought in a clear and ordered manner, and the struggle undertaken by him (a struggle that brings violence to the representation and, as we shall see, a genuine struggle against the language) is proof of it. Despite this emphasis toward an understandable communication of his philosophy, the effort of the mystic was not crowned by success: readers have to contend with the enormous linguistic confusion of his writings.¹⁴⁸

In assuming this consideration as a point of reference, Hegel's lectures appear as an attempt to 'put order' into Böhme's philosophical thought. In order to understand how Hegel intends to guide his students toward understanding the speculative basis of *Theosophia Revelata*, let us start by considering the following problem: why did

¹⁴⁷ Cf. AuN, 75 et seq.

¹⁴⁸ *Werke* 15, 300 (cf. TWA 20, 94): "Die allgemeine Idee Böhmens zeigt sich einer Seits tief und gründlich; er kommt anderer Seits aber, bei allem Bedürfnis und Ringen nach Bestimmung und Unterscheidung in der Entwicklung seiner göttlichen Anschauungen des Universum's, nicht zur Klarheit und Ordnung. Es ist kein systematischer Zusammenhang, die größte Verworrenheit in der Abscheidung, – selbst in seiner Tabelle, wo I. II. III. genommen".

Hegel choose Böhme as the “first German philosopher”? This definition must be put into relation with the interpretation of Böhme’s language we have reconstructed, since it is closely linked to Hegel’s conception of the *Barbarei* of Jakob Böhme. We will return then to Hegel’s translation of the language of Böhme.

3.1.2 Böhme’s Struggle at the Origins of German Philosophy

“For Germany” – Hegel wrote to van Ghert – “he [Böhme] is of particular interest, since he is actually the first German philosopher”.¹⁴⁹ This, as we have already noted, is a crucial statement: German philosophy, for Hegel, emerges at the beginning of the seventeenth century (and not before!) with the writings of Böhme. In the 1825–1826 lecture course we read: “he has been called the *philosophus teutonicus*, and indeed it is through him that philosophy made its appearance for the first time in Germany with a distinctive character”.¹⁵⁰ Or, in the version compiled by Michelet: “Jakob Böhme is the first German philosopher; the content of his philosophizing is genuinely German”.¹⁵¹ First of all, it has to be asked: what was the particular, distinctive character of German philosophy that Hegel was referring to in these lines and which he found for the first time in the work of the Teutonic philosopher? In what sense was the philosophy of Böhme plainly German?

The answer is partly contained in the position that Böhme occupies in Hegel’s *History of Philosophy*, where he represents the mirror opposite of Bacon’s “external philosophizing” (“äußerliches Philosophieren”). Compared to Bacon’s philosophical method, based on observation of the natural world, Böhme’s philosophy retreats into the inner depth of the subject. As we briefly saw earlier,¹⁵² Hegel puts the emphasis on the philosophical significance of this internalization, in comparison with Bacon’s external philosophizing, an example of what “in England is called philosophy”. The “distinctive character” that Hegel attributes to the entire course of German philosophy, inaugurated with the speculation of Böhme, consists in the very capacity to elaborate a philosophical discourse starting off from the discovery of inner depth. In this sense Böhme is the first German philosopher, since his thought is directed inward, concentrating itself upon the subject. This is why Hegel insists on the adjective *tief* (*profound*) to describe Böhme’s mysticism: profundity is considered the fundamental quality of philosophy in the German language and Böhme was, so to speak, its founder. During the lecture course of 1825–1826, Hegel clarifies this point in the following way: “one side is the entirely coarse and barbarous presentation, on the other hand is apparent the German, deep spirit, which deals

¹⁴⁹ *Briefe* 1, 381–382.

¹⁵⁰ *Werke* 15, 300 (cf. V 9, 80): “Er ist genannt worden der *philosophus teutonicus*, und in der That ist durch ihn erst in Deutschland Philosophie mit einem eigenthümlichen Charakter hervorgetreten.”

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* (cf. TWA 20, 94): “Jakob Böhm ist der erste deutsche Philosoph; der Inhalt seines *Philosophierens* ist ächt deutsch.”

¹⁵² Cf. above, Chap. 2, Sect. 3.2.3.

with what is most inward and, in doing so, brings out its force, its strength”.¹⁵³ To the structure of reasoning we already know – that in Böhme’s writings there is a friction between the barbarous form of representation and the speculative depth – are added several new details: on the one hand, Hegel states that Böhme possesses “the profound German spirit” (whereas it will be remembered that Paracelsus lacked the “Tiefe des Gemüts”, the “profundity of spirit” that Böhme had). On the other hand, the profundity typical of German philosophy is related with *power* (*Macht*), the *force* (*Kraft*) that emanates from this same interiority. The genuinely Teutonic character of Böhme’s speculation therefore doesn’t consist simply in having internalized the fulcrum of philosophical reasoning but is also, and above all, the energy that underlies such an approach.

We have already seen that barbarous imagery is not extraneous to the expression of this same force. It will now be shown that the origin of German philosophy in Hegel’s discourse can be traced back to the very way in which Böhme generated, and used in his writings, the friction between linguistic barbarity and depth of content. The text in fact continues by stating: “it is a barbarous form of presentation and expression, a struggle of his spirit [...] against language, and the content of this struggle is the most profound idea, which discloses the unification of the most absolute opposites”.¹⁵⁴ Böhme’s (Teutonic) spirit struggles with the language in order to give expression to “the most profound idea”. The mystic’s struggle against the language is embodied in a barbarous prose that the reader finds difficult to enter; yet this very warlike attitude toward the expressive capacity of the words ultimately defines the profoundness of Böhme’s plan, which seeks to elaborate a content of radical importance, summarized by Hegel in these terms: the unification of the most absolute opposites. This attempt at unification may refer to what, according to Hegel, is the central core of Böhme’s philosophy, namely the relationship between God and Lucifer: in this sense God and Lucifer are the most absolute opposites, in mutual conflict, and whom Böhme wants to unite. But the barbarities of form and the profundity of the idea can also be meant as those absolute opposites which the spirit of the shoemaker is seeking to unite, to fit together, bringing about a violent conflict within the subject. These two opposing elements are so mutually interdependent that it’s difficult even to talk about Böhme’s thought without at the same time embracing its form.¹⁵⁵ In other words, we cannot attempt to explain the content of Böhme’s philosophy without becoming involved, as readers, in that same struggle in which the spirit of the shoemaker was immersed, and accept the inadequacy

¹⁵³ I quote from *Werke* 15, 304 (but see the same passage in V 9, 80): “Die eine Seite ist die ganz rohe und barbarische Darstellung, anderer Seits erkennt man das deutsche, tiefe Gemüth, das mit dem Innersten verkehrt, und darin seine Macht, seine Kraft exerziert andererseits erkennt man das deutsche, tiefe Gemüt, das mit dem Innersten verkehrt und darin seine Macht, seine Kraft exercirt.”

¹⁵⁴ I quote from *Werke* 15, 304 (but see the same passage in V 9, 80): “es ist eine barbarische Form der Darstellung und des Ausdrucks – ein Kampf seines Gemüths [...] mit der Sprache; und der Inhalt des Kampfes ist die tiefste Idee, die die absolutesten Gegensätze zu vereinigen aufzeigt.”

¹⁵⁵ *Werke* 15, (cf. TWA 20, 98): “Von den Gedanken Jakob Böhm’s läßt sich meist nicht viel sprechen, ohne die Weise seines Ausdrucks, die Form desselben anzunehmen”.

of form as an integral part of the speculation, since the form conceals and at the same reveals the content.

At the roots of German philosophy there is therefore not only a shift toward interiority, but also a battle for the communication of that which is hidden in the profundity toward which the subject is looking. At the base of the Teutonic nature of Böhme's writings is therefore the idea of tension, to which the lectures of 1823–1824 refer in these terms: "He called himself *theosophus teutonicus*, and we can say that the manner of his striving was genuinely German",¹⁵⁶ where the verb *streben* suggests aspiration, the tension toward reaching a destination. The deep speculation that Hegel regards as a fundamental characteristic of German philosophy is linked from its very origins to the violent, barbarous and enthusiastic force of Böhme's language. A passage from the lectures on Scholastic philosophy enables us to focus more clearly on the nature of this link: "the language *must* be treated violently; the fine Latin of Cicero cannot enter into profound speculation".¹⁵⁷

Indirectly, this example adds to the discussion on Böhme's language and its distinctive characteristics: the Latin of Cicero is too *fine* (i.e. clean, correct, accurate) to be able to transmit "profound speculation". It is necessary instead to do violence in order to make it suitable for expressing the depths of thought, and it is for this reason that Hegel allows German philosophy to start with Böhme's attack on the stability and the beauty of the language. Böhme's violent act made it possible for the first time to access a level of thought that had never before been reached by a German thinker. Speculation and barbarity of form are once again brought together: they are in fact two elements in conflict, from which the first Teutonic philosophy originated.¹⁵⁸

The reference to the authentically German value of Böhme's expressive effort leads on to a further parallel, this time between Böhme and Luther. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* we read: "What characterizes Böhme and makes him remarkable is the Protestant principle already mentioned, according to which the intellectual world is placed in one's own spirit and everything, which otherwise was beyond, is intuited and known and felt in one's own self-consciousness".¹⁵⁹ The retreat into the interiority of the subject, which Hegel had defined as the characteristic trait of Teutonic philosophy, is now described more precisely as a product of the Reformation, and for this reason it is called in this passage "the Protestant principle". With the Reformation, central attention was given to individual conscience and the possibility of observing the "intellectual world" from the point of view of personal interiority; the influence of this Protestant principle was so strong for Hegel that it determined the entire evolution of German philosophical thought: "The

¹⁵⁶ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133r: "Er selber nannte sich theosophus theutonicus[,] und wir können sagen[,] die Art und Weise seines Strebens sei ächt deutscher Art."

¹⁵⁷ *Werke* 15, 149 (cf. TWA 19, 541): "Man muß der Sprache Gewalt anthun; das schöne Latein des Cicero kann sich nicht in tiefe Spekulation einlassen."

¹⁵⁸ In this respect see Ripanti (1987), 5–7.

¹⁵⁹ *Werke* 15, 300 (cf. TWA 20, 94): "Was Böhme auszeichnet und merkwürdig macht, ist das schon erwähnte protestantische Princip, die Intellektual-Welt in das eigene Gemüth hereinzulegen und in seinem Selbstbewußtseyn Alles anzuschauen und zu wissen und zu fühlen, was sonst jenseits war."

freedom of spirit first began essentially with Luther; and it had this form, [that is to say] to maintain oneself in the essential core”.¹⁶⁰ The Teutonic philosopher Jakob Böhme, educated in a Protestant environment, therefore applied to the field of philosophical speculation one of the crucial elements that emerged at the time of the Reformation – the centrality of the subject, which is the prerequisite for “freedom of spirit”. But the relationship with Luther’s legacy doesn’t end here: the strongest point of contact between Böhme and Luther is the way in which both enriched the expressive possibilities of the German language. Insofar as the linguistic innovation brought about by Luther, Hegel states: “Luther could not have completed his reformation without translating the Bible into German; and without this form, namely thinking in one’s own language, subjective freedom couldn’t have existed”.¹⁶¹ The freedom of the subject cannot be achieved without learning “to think in one’s own language”. In the case of Luther, this means that the purpose of the Reformation could not be completed without giving a new German voice to the sacred texts. Luther thus provided the linguistic instrument necessary to be able to decipher the many meanings of the Reformation, especially the guiding principle of the freedom of individual conscience.

If Luther gave the Bible a German voice for the first time, Böhme gave a German voice to philosophy.¹⁶² Before Böhme, in other words, there was no philosophical lexicon in the German language: the creation of a personal language on the part of the shoemaker was not only an essential part of his individual development, but played a role of fundamental importance for the entire history of German philosophy. Böhme is therefore the first Teutonic philosopher because he developed the first philosophical vocabulary that could communicate the speculative depth of his thought in German.¹⁶³ In a famous letter to Voss, Hegel stated that he had a particu-

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 254 (cf. TWA 20, 50): “Erst mit Luther begann die Freiheit des Geistes, im Kerne: und hatte diese Form, sich im Kerne zu halten.”

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 257 (cf. TWA 20, 53): “Luther hätte nicht seine Reformation vollendet, ohne die Bibel in’s Deutsche zu übersetzen; und nicht ohne diese Form, in eigener Sprache zu denken, hätte die subjektive Freiheit bestehen können.” With regard to Hegel’s view on the contribution of Luther and *mysticism* in the creation of the language, see Gadamer (1996), 33–34. It should be pointed out that the word *mysticism* is not specifically used, even though there is reference to a generic “pietistic legacy of his [Hegel’s] Swabian homeland”.

¹⁶² Cf. *Briefe* 1, 99–100 (Hegel to Voss, April 1805): “Luther hat die Bibel, Sie den Homer deutsch reden gemacht, – das größte Geschenk, das einem Volke gemacht werden kann [...] [W]enn Sie diese beiden Beispiele vergessen wollen, so will ich von meinem Bestreben sagen, daß ich die Philosophie versuchen will, deutsch sprechen zu lehren.” It is of no secondary importance in this context that Hegel should underline the reading of the Bible in Böhme’s education: “Ein Hauptbuch, das er las, war die Bibel.” (cf. Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133r). In the version in *Werke* the phrase is less striking: “Die Bibel hat er immer gelesen.” (*Werke* 15, 300; cf. TWA 20, 94).

¹⁶³ Cf. Merker (1993), 106: “In describing this universe tormented by oppositions and contradictions, Böhme manages, in his writings in German of 1612–1623, to coin a terminology that two centuries later would not only be appreciated but indeed utilized by the idealist philosopher Hegel”. Taylor (1975) also agrees about Hegel’s view as to the importance of Böhme’s language (“Hegel sees prefigured in Böhme’s figurative, mystical language, the central truths of speculative philosophy”); he shows however that he hasn’t understood the bases of Hegel’s judgment when he states: “Though why this should be considered philosophy is not entirely clear; unless it is that it is a theology which makes no attempt to base itself on any positive authority” (519–520).

lar ambition: to teach philosophy to speak German. Not only did Hegel clearly detect this same ambition in the writings of Böhme but, by describing him as the “first German philosopher”, he places him in an important position: Böhme becomes a precedent from which it is possible to draw inspiration (while recognizing the limits of this first, barbarous, philosophical attempt in the German language).

Hegel’s reuse of certain words from Böhme’s vocabulary – words in his view unjustly forgotten and worth restoring to common use among German philosophers – must be included in this context. Among these is certainly *Urteil*, which Hegel uses in a Böhman sense even where he is not directly discussing Böhme’s thought, demonstrating the fact that it is a term of philosophical importance that ought to be revived and appropriately adopted. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* he also adds *Urstand*. Commenting on a passage from Böhme’s *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit* (*On Divine Contemplation*), Hegel states: “he uses *Urstand* for *Substanz*, and it is a pity that we shouldn’t use this and various other apt expressions”.¹⁶⁴ The word chosen by Böhme (a word with a German etymological root) communicates a richer content than the word of Latin derivation due to the prefix *ur-*, which expresses the *original*, *primary*, *archetypal* value of the *state* or *condition* (*Stand*).¹⁶⁵ As we can see, this is the same subdivision that Böhme (and Hegel after him) applied – though without any basis from the etymological point of view – to the word *Ur-Teil*. *Ur-stand* is, then, the *original* state, the *primary condition*: the meaning of *substance* (from *sub-stare*) is certainly included in the etymology of the German word, but this latter word has a broader semantic content.

Hegel’s appreciation of these words in Böhme’s language – *Urteil*, *Urstand*, *Qualität* – is the result of a careful reading of some significant parts of *Theosophia Revelata*. The manuscripts relating to the courses in the *History of Philosophy* for the years 1823–1824 (Hotho) and 1825–1826 allow us to consider more closely the way in which Hegel approached the reading of Böhme. Particularly interesting in these texts, written by students, is one characteristic of Hegel’s approach: namely, his attempt to *translate* various words typical of the language of Jakob Böhme into a terminology appropriate for conceptual expression. As we have already suggested, this approach is the most obvious result of the way in which Hegel interprets the balance between concept and representation in the shoemaker’s writings: the representation in fact partially conceals the concept but at the same time expresses it, though in an inadequate and provisional manner. Readers of Böhme should therefore recognize the concept transmitted by sensory representations and strip it of the expressive limitations that these representations typically have.

This is exactly the task that Hegel carried out, not only as interpreter of Böhme but also more simply as teacher: it shouldn’t be forgotten that his explanations of Böhme’s lexicon in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* are intended for an audience. Let us now consider a part of these lectures where Hegel provides a commentary on various passages from Böhme for the benefit of his students.

¹⁶⁴ I quote from *Werke* 15, 313 (but see the same passage in V 9, 83–84): “Urstand gebraucht er [Böhme] für Substanz; und es ist schade, daß wir diesen und so manchen anderen treffenden Ausdruck nicht gebrauchen dürfen.” Cf. *History of Phil.*, 99.

¹⁶⁵ On the use of Latin words by Böhme, see AuN, ch. 4. of my introduction.

3.1.3 Rediscovering the Vitality of the Concept: Translating Böhme's Terminology

"The principle of the concept", we read in the course of 1825–1826, "is wholly vital in Jacob Böhme, only he cannot express it in the form of thought".¹⁶⁶ Not only does Hegel recognize the presence of a conceptual substratum in Böhme's writings, but he also declares that the "principle of the concept" is in Böhme "wholly vital". The vitality derives, as we have seen, from the mystic's expressive manner (his enthusiastic *Barbarei*), where he uses representations as an approach toward communicating the speculative foundation. What we will now seek to show is that Hegel's interpretation is specifically directed toward rediscovering this conceptual vitality in Böhme's thought: the energy of the concepts elaborated by Böhme is, in the last analysis, where their modernity lies and is also the reason why Hegel, together with his students, carries out a detailed study of various parts of *Theosophia Revelata*, despite the formal shortcomings attributed to Böhme's writings.

Before considering in detail a brief section of these lectures, certain preliminary remarks are necessary. As already pointed out, in compiling the two editions of *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Michelet amalgamated various manuscripts (written by students or by Hegel himself); in the final text the sources are therefore interwoven and mixed together and it isn't possible to identify changes made from one course year to the next or to look for evidence of an evolution.¹⁶⁷ It therefore follows that to examine the structure and development of Hegel's lectures on Böhme we must refer to the individual published manuscripts, alongside the unpublished manuscript of Hotho, already mentioned several times in our investigation. By identifying various important differences between the course for 1823–1824 (Hotho) and the course for 1825–1826 we can also sketch out a line of evolution in Hegel's interpretation.

Insofar as the structure of these lessons, Hegel adopts the following method in all the courses: substantial passages are quoted from *Theosophia Revelata*, but Böhme's text is repeatedly interrupted with comments and explanations. In particular, where Böhme uses a term typical of his figurative language, Hegel pauses to give his own personal interpretation of the meaning of the word in question. These are examples of *translation* in the sense already explained: in order to show students the conceptual basis beyond the representation, Hegel translates Böhme's words into his own language, a language that he judges suitable for philosophical analysis.

In the Hotho manuscript (1823–1824) most of the quotes from *Theosophia Revelata* originate from *Aurora*, which was without doubt one of Hegel's main texts for the study of Böhme's mysticism.¹⁶⁸ There are also various quotes from two short essays included in *Der Weg zu Christo* (*The Way to Christ*), namely *Von wahrer Gelassenheit* (*On True Abandonment*) and *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit* (*On*

¹⁶⁶ I quote from *Werke* 15, 306 (cf. the same passage in V 9, 82): "Das Princip des Begriffs ist in Böhme durchaus lebendig, nur kann er es nicht in der Form des Gedankens aussprechen."

¹⁶⁷ V 6, xxxvii et seq.

¹⁶⁸ See in this respect Harris (1997), 704. Cf. also Schüßler (1965), 49.

Divine Contemplation). In the edition for the course of 1825–1826 by Jaeschke and Garniron the number of quotations from this latter essay increases. In this text (and in the Dove manuscript of 1825) there is also a reference to Böhme's last work, *Quaestiones theosophicae, oder Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung* of 1624 (*Consideration of Divine Revelation*). The quotations from *Theosophia Revelata* therefore gradually increase: the addition of passages from the writings that are not mentioned in Hotho's manuscript seem in fact to suggest that between 1823 and 1825 Hegel was continuing to read and to study the works of Böhme.¹⁶⁹

On Divine Contemplation is one of the most important sources used by Hegel for his courses. In Hotho's transcript of the course there is a long quote from the third chapter of Böhme's text, which would be reused over the following years.¹⁷⁰ The passage is quoted by Hegel in dealing with Böhme's conception of negativity, which is the focal point – we might even say the most vital concept – around which these lectures revolve. In the course of 1825–1826 the text reads:

The beginning of all beings is the word as God's exhalation [...]. For 'word' he means the revelation of divine will. The word is the outflow of the Divine One and yet it is God; what has flown out is the wisdom of all powers (δυνάμεις). From such a revelation of all powers, in which the will of the Eternal contemplates itself, flow intellection and knowledge of the egoity (*Ichts*) (opposite to the Nothing, *Nichts*) – (self-consciousness in the spirit, relation of vitality to itself). Now, the Other is image and resemblance of God; this he calls *Mysterium Magnum*, the Separator, creator of all creatures, outflow from the will, which makes the One divided. The Son is the heart that pulsates in the Father, the core of all powers [...]; he is the brightness which shines in the Father; if the Son were not to shine in the Father, then the latter would be a dark valley.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ The edition compiled by Michelet contains references also to other writings by Böhme: of particular note is a table transcribed from Letter 47 (in BS, vol. 9: *Theosophische Sendbriefe*): cf. *Werke* 15, 300–301; TWA 20, 94–95.

¹⁷⁰ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 134v: "Der Anfang aller Wesen ist das Wort, und Gott ist das Eine. Das Wort der ewige Anfang, denn es ist die Offenbarung des Einen, wodurch die göttliche Kraft zur Wissenschaft wird. Das Wort ist der Ausfluß des göttlichen Willens und ist durch Gott. Dieß Ausgeflossene ist die Weisheit aller Kräfte, aller Tugenden Ursach, der ewige Wille beschaut sich in diesem Einen und daraus springt das Schauen des ewigen im Ichts (Gegensatz von Nichts). Weiter daher wird dieß Ichts das Selbstbewußtsein; indem das Herz des Sohns die Contraction zum Effekt des Für-sich-seins ist. Der Sohn ist der Separator im Ausfluß des Einen, die Schiedlichkeit des Ausflusses, der Amtmann, der alle Dinge ordnet. Dieser Sohn ist der Lucifer, der aber abfiel."

¹⁷¹ V 9, 84 (my italics): "Der Anfang aller Wesen ist das Wort als das Aushauchen Gottes [...]. Unter dem 'Wort' versteht er die Offenbarung des göttlichen Willens. Das Wort ist Ausfluß des göttlichen Willens und ist doch Gott; das Ausgeflossene ist die Weisheit aller Kräfte (δυνάμεις). Aus solcher Offenbarung aller Kräfte, worin sich der Wille des Ewigen beschaut, fließen Verstand und Wissenschaft des *Ichts* (entgegengesetzt dem Nichts) – (Selbstbewußtsein im Geist, Beziehung der Lebendigkeit mit sich). Das Andere ist nun das Ebenbild Gottes; dies nennt er das Mysterium Magnum, den Separator, Schöpfer aller Kreatur, Ausfluß des Willens, welcher den Einen schiedlich macht. Der Sohn ist das Herz, das Pulsierende im Vater, der Kern in allen Kräften [...]; er ist der Glanz, der im Vater leuchtet; so der Sohn nicht im Vater leuchtete, so wäre er ein finsternes Tal". Cf. the same passage in *Werke* 15, 313–314. On this use of the word *schiedlich* as *divided*, *separate*, with direct reference to Böhme's *Aurora*, see DW, *sub voce*. See also the editors' note on this passage, V 9, 281.

As we can see, the quote from Böhme is interspersed with comments from Hegel, so that at first sight it is difficult to see where the quotation ends and Hegel's comments begin (for this reason the main additions are indicated in italics). In reality, this isn't *one* quote, but *two* quotes that Hegel puts together, a procedure repeated in other parts of these lectures. The first quote starts with the words "the beginning of all beings", taken from the third chapter of *On Divine Contemplation* (which in turn opens with the first lines of John's Gospel). Whereas "the Son is the heart" begins the second quotation, from the third chapter of *Aurora*. The juxtaposition of these two passages is justified by the way in which Hegel interprets the figure of the *Separator* which appears at the end of the first quotation: the concept of *separation* (which Böhme makes into *Separator*) is in fact the fulcrum of the whole discussion, based by Hegel on the texts cited. The choice of these two passages and the way they are linked together show unequivocally how Hegel was interested in Böhme's description of divine separation. Even though the word *Urteil* is not mentioned here, it is clear that these lectures rework and develop the theme of the *original scission* of the Divine as set out in the *Encyclopedia*: once again we note therefore that the references in the published texts are in reality supported by a much wider oral reflection.

The title of the third chapter of *On Divine Contemplation* announces that the subject to be considered is the way in which eternal will, which has a supernatural, *bottomless* (*ungründlich*) knowledge, generates visible, live, tangible nature.¹⁷² The reference to the Gospel of John is used to introduce this very problem: John's *logos*, in the language of Böhme, becomes divine action, the breathing, the exhalation of God ("Aushauchen Gottes"). Feeling that this use of the term *word* (*Wort*) requires an explanation, Hegel inserts an explanation into the quotation: "For 'word' he means the revelation of divine will". And it is precisely at the moment of the revelation, i.e. of the separation, that Hegel places the emphasis on his reconstruction, tracing a path that leads back to *Aurora*: the *bottomless*, immobile, nature of eternal will is not mentioned at all. Yet immediately after the word *force* (*Kraft*) Hegel makes another digression in which he provides a translation of the German word in Greek, δυνάμις, to underline the fact that the word emanating from God is dynamism, energy, mobility.¹⁷³

The next phrase has the additions that are most relevant from our point of view. Böhme writes: "From such a revelation of all powers, in which the will of the

¹⁷² BS, vol. 4: *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, ch. 3, description of the content: "Vom natürlichen Grunde. Wie die Natur ein Gegenwurf göttlicher Wissenschaft sey, dadurch sich der ewige (einige) Wille mit der ungründlichen übernatürlichen Wissenschaft empfindlich, sichtlich, wirkende und wollende mache; und was *Mysterium Magnum*; wie alles von, durch und in Gott sey: Wie Gott allen Dingen so nahe sey, und alles in allen erfülle." On the crucial transition from the immobile eternity of the Divine to God Creator, which gives life to nature, see Muratori (2006).

¹⁷³ Jaeschke and Garniron have noted that Hegel has attributed determination "aller Kräfte" to the previous word, *Wissenschaft*, whereas in reality it refers to the terms *Anfang* and *Ursach* that appear in the following lines of Böhme's text, which Hegel has not cited (cf. V 9, 281). Hegel's addition of δυνάμις appears in the Dove manuscript (1825), but not in the Hotho manuscript (1823–1824).

Eternal contemplates itself, flow intellection and knowledge of the egoity (*Ichts*)". *Ichts* is a 'Böhmian word', and Hegel therefore thinks it appropriate to make a short comment. This indeed is a word-game similar to *Qualität-Quelle-Qual*: here, added onto the word *Ich* (*I*) are the letters *ts* to suggest a conceptual relationship with the word *Nichts* (*Nothing*). Hegel observes that *Ichts* is "opposite to *Nichts*",¹⁷⁴ since from the original divine Nothing is emanated an *I*: the created subject therefore has its roots in Nothing.

The second parenthesis in the commentary on Böhme's *Ichts* contains an attempt at translation by Hegel, which seeks to point out certain conceptual elements that the word-game carries. According to Hegel, *Ichts* represents "self-consciousness in the spirit, a relationship of vitality to itself".¹⁷⁵ The emergence of self-consciousness is also given the characteristic of vitality: the passage from *Nichts* to *Ichts* is in fact responsible for the generation of life (we will be returning shortly to this reflexive movement, which Hegel describes as a relationship of vitality to itself).

Böhme's text continues by outlining the relationship between *Ichts* and eternal will, stating that egoity emerges from the revelation of all things, in which eternal will mirrors itself: this is the transition from *Nichts* to creation.¹⁷⁶ After Hegel's 'translation' of *Ichts*, the text of the 1825–1826 lectures continues with a slight deviation from Böhme. While Böhme writes "and this image and likeness is the *Mysterium Magnum*, the creator of all beings and creatures, because it is the *Separator* in the outflow of the will, which makes the will of the eternal One divided: He is the dividedness in the will",¹⁷⁷ Hegel's lectures continue with this text: "the Other is image and resemblance of God; this he calls *Mysterium Magnum*, the Separator, creator of all creatures, outflow from the will, which makes the One divided." Hegel has added a further definition to this "image of God", the *I* that emanates from *Nothing*, that is to say "das Andere", the *Other*. Given the fact that the figure of the "separate Other" ("abgesonderte[s] Andere") plays a central role in the references to Böhme in the published texts (especially in the *Encyclopedia*), we ought to regard it as a significant addition. In this way, Hegel is clearly linking this quotation from *On Divine Contemplation* to Böhme's theme of the separation between God and his Other, in which he had shown interest back in the Jena years.

The *Separator*, he who makes the One separate, is not at first clearly identified with the figure of Lucifer, but is presented by Böhme as the emergence of subjectivity from original Nothingness. Hegel then introduces the quote from *Aurora* that describes the generation of the Son from the Father, which he interprets as a similar

¹⁷⁴ Further on in the same text *Ichts* and *Nichts* are considered as equivalents of *ens* and *non ens* (cf. V 9, 85).

¹⁷⁵ Dove (1825), 162, has a shorter formulation: "Aus solchem Offenbaren fließt das Wissen des Ichts (Selbstbewußtseyen)". On Hegel's view on the emergence of self-consciousness in Böhme's mysticism, see also Harris (1997), 684.

¹⁷⁶ BS, vol. 4: *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, ch. 3, 4: "da sich der ewige Wille im *Ichts* schauet, und in der Weisheit in Lust einführet zu einer Gleichniß und Ebenbildniß."

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., ch. 3, 5: "Und dieselbe Ebenbildniß ist das *Mysterium Magnum*, als der Schöpfer aller Wesen und Creaturen, dann es ist der *Separator* in dem Ausfluß des Willens, welcher den Willen des ewigen Ein schiedlich machet: Er ist die Schiedlichkeit im Willen".

original separation (*Ur-Teilung*) through which the Father expresses his force and his splendor in the figure of the Son. Hegel's lectures contain a further significant detail: if the Father did not beget the Son – writes Böhme – it would be only “a dark valley”. This is a tangible image, inappropriate for expressing the conceptual nucleus – in other terms, to use Hegel's words, the transition to the moment of self-consciousness. In the 1825 Dove manuscript we find a translation by Hegel of this Böhman metaphor with the word *Abstraktum*, a translation once again introduced in parenthesis.¹⁷⁸ The dark valley then becomes the featureless abstraction from which the figure of the *Separator*, of the *I*, of self-consciousness must emerge. In this sense the *Separator/Ichts* of the first quote and the Son in the passage from *Aurora* play a similar role in relation to *Nichts* on the one hand and the “dark valley” on the other, and can therefore be used by Hegel as examples of a single conceptual intuition: the definition of self-consciousness. It should be noted that in the Dove manuscript the profound consonance established by Hegel between the two figures is clear from the fact that the quotation from *On Divine Contemplation* flows without interruption into the quotation from *Aurora*.

The identification between the Son and the *Separator* cannot be found in these terms in Böhme's writings, but belongs to Hegel's own interpretation.¹⁷⁹ The Hotho manuscript establishes this identity very clearly: “the Son is the Separator in the outflow of the One, the dividedness of the outflow, the one who is in charge and orders all things. This Son is Lucifer, who however fell.”¹⁸⁰ Hegel associates firstly the Son with the *Separator*, then identifies the Son with Lucifer, creating a sequence whose common thread is the *Schiedlichkeit*, the phase of separation of the One. Both the Son and Lucifer are therefore figures of scission, *Separator*, and from a conceptual point of view Hegel puts them on the same level.

In the next section we will consider in detail the speculative significance of the *Separator*, which plays a crucial role in Hegel's interpretation in that it is elevated to become a distinctive feature of the mysticism of Jakob Böhme and seen as an attempt at dialectic elaboration of opposites. We will conclude this brief look at the method Hegel uses in reading various passages of Böhme with one final example. It is a quote from *On Divine Contemplation* (chapter 1), referred to immediately before the long passage already examined. The text of the Hegel lectures reads:

If the hidden God, who is one essence and will, had not driven itself into dividedness of will and had not introduced this in internal grasping (*identity*) (*return of the relation to itself*), so that the same dividedness would not continue in struggle, then how should the divine will be revealed to him? How can there be cognition in one united will?¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Dove (1825), 162–163.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. V 9, 282. The concepts are certainly linked with each other in Böhme's writings, but not completely identified together as in Hegel's interpretation.

¹⁸⁰ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 134v: “Der Sohn ist der Separator im Ausfluß des Einen, die Schiedlichkeit des Ausflusses, der Amtmann, der alle Dinge ordnet. Dieser Sohn ist der Lucifer, der aber abfiel.”

¹⁸¹ V 9, 84: “Hätte der verborgene Gott, der ein einiges Wesen und Willen ist, sich nicht in Schiedlichkeit des Willens ausgeführt und diese nicht in Infaßlichkeit (*Identität*) | eingeführt (*Rückkehr der Beziehung auf sich*), so daß dieselbe Schiedlichkeit nicht im Streit stünde – wie

The problem is well known: the introduction of the possibility of separation (*Schiedlichkeit*) within the hidden God ("der verborgene Gott"), whose only wish must necessarily be to know an inner scission so that his revelation can take place. Böhme therefore states that the division of the only will of the hidden God is essential to enable God himself to reach a *knowledge* of this will: the conflict (*Streit*) that results from this scission of the divine essence is therefore a necessary conflict, without which God cannot acquire knowledge of himself.

In Böhme's figurative language this struggle is often represented by the conflict between God and his first creature, the fallen angel Lucifer, who is given a crucial role since his opposition to divine will enables the revelation, the determination of this same will, to occur. At paragraph 13 of the first chapter of *On Divine Contemplation* Böhme indeed adds:

The Evil or the Counterwill causes the Good, that is the Will, so that it will again press towards its origin [*Urstand*], that is God, and that the Good, that is the good will, becomes desiring. Indeed a thing which in itself is only good, and has no torment, does not desire anything, because it does not know anything better in itself or before itself, for which it could yearn.¹⁸²

We note the recurrence of the words *Urstand* and *Qual*, which has already been discussed in relation to Hegel's interpretation of the concept of *Qualität*. Evil is understood here as *Widerwillige*, that which goes against (*wider*) the will of God, against Goodness. This is then *Qual*, the torment within Goodness, which drives Goodness to know for the first time the impulse of desire and therefore to *wish* in the full sense, consciously. A thing that is *only good* – explains Böhme – has no torment and desires nothing. In the same way that *Qual* is torment but also the source (*Quelle*) of movement in *Qualität*, so too Evil is the opposition of Goodness, but is also the source from which Goodness draws in order to define itself and its purposes.

Let us return at this point to the passage chosen by Hegel and above all to the additional comments in parentheses. Hegel recognizes in Böhme's description of the transition from the hidden God to the revealed God – a transition which, as

sollte ihm der Wille Gottes offenbar sein? Wie mag in einem einigen Willen eine Erkenntnis sein?" Böhme's text also appears in this case slightly modified: "Wann sich der verborgene Gott, welcher nur ein Einig Wesen und Wille ist, nicht hätte mit seinem Willen aus sich aufgeführt, und hätte sich aus der Ewigen Wissenschaft im *Temperamento*, in Schiedlichkeit des Willens ausgeführt, und hätte nicht dieselbe Schiedlichkeit in eine Infaßlichkeit zu einem natürlichen und creatürlichen Leben eingeführt, und daß dieselbe Schiedlichkeit im Leben nicht im Streit stünde, wie wolte ihm dan der verborgene Wille Gottes, welcher in sich nur Einer ist, offenbar seyn? Wie mag in einem Einigen Willen eine Erkenntniß seiner selber seyn?" (BS, vol. 4: *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, ch. 1, 10).

¹⁸²BS, vol. 4: *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit* ch. 1, 13: "Das Böse oder Widerwillige ursachet das Gute, als den Willen, daß er wieder nach seinem Urstand, als nach Gott dringe, und das Gute, als der gute Wille, begehrende werde: Dann ein Ding, das in sich nur gut ist, und keine Qual hat, das begehret nichts, dann es weiß nichts bessers in sich oder vor sich, darnach es könnte lüstern." Cf. also the version of the text in *Theosophia Revelata* (Böhme (1715): "Dann ein Ding / das in sich nur gut ist / und kein Quaal hat / das begehret nichts / dann es weiß nichts bessers in sich oder für sich / danach es könnte lüstern."

already noted, carries with it the problem of the origin of Evil – the phases of a well-defined dialectical movement. The initial scission (“*Schiedlichkeit des Willens*”) is followed by a moment that Böhme calls the introduction into the *Infaßlichkeit* – a term that belongs to Böhme’s vocabulary,¹⁸³ built on the base of the verb *fassen*, to grip, onto which the prefix *in-* is added to emphasize that this is an action of internalization. Hegel suggests that *Infaßlichkeit* can be ‘translated’ with *Identität*, or rather, with the phase of return to identity. Hegel’s second parenthesis in fact clarifies the concept and establishes that the introduction into *Infaßlichkeit* consists of a “return of the relation into itself”.¹⁸⁴ Starting off from the initial *Abstraktum*, the separation has created a two-pole relationship through which each of the two poles can be defined (Good in relation to Evil etc.); a conflict is generated between these two opposites which must however *be returned*, in the third phase, to a relationship of the original being with itself. The vitality expressed by the separating principle must close back on itself, as stated in the quotation previously discussed. Naturally the third phase differs from the first in that there is no relationship at the beginning: the reflection of the relationship on oneself is only possible thanks to the transition through scission, from which emerges the consciousness of divine will, or, in Hegelian terms, self-consciousness.

In relation to this closure of the relationship on oneself, another passage of the same work by Böhme contains the comment:

Indeed one will cannot break itself into pieces, just like a soul does not break in pieces when it divides itself into a good and an evil will. Rather, the outgoing of the senses divides itself into an evil and a good will, and the soul remains whole in itself and suffers that an evil and good will arise and dwell in it.¹⁸⁵

In exactly the same way as two opposite desires can cohabit in *one single soul* (once again *Gemüt*: soul, spirit, mind), so Good and Evil, God and the Other, must be understood as part of one unity, despite the original scission from which they were generated. The equilibrium of the initial unity is broken by the introduction of separation, and yet the opposing poles, the fruit of this same separation, must be recognized as elements constituting one and the same being. The scission emerges in the unity and the unity remains present in the scission. The interdependence of the two poles is essential in Böhme’s discussion: using Hegel’s terminology, we might say that the identity that results from it is an identity that remains in tension, or an identity that contains within it the destabilizing presence of the separation.

In the early chapters of *On Divine Contemplation* Hegel finds the structure of a dialectical movement, even though set out using a language derived partly from religious representations and partly from Böhme’s linguistic creativity, which give

¹⁸³ The term *Infaßlichkeit* is missing in DW.

¹⁸⁴ On the *manifestation* as movement of return in itself, see Nancy (1998), 55.

¹⁸⁵ BS, vol. 4: *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, ch. 1, 12: “Dann ein Einiger Wille kann sich nicht in Stücke von einander brechen: gleichwie sich das Gemüthe nicht in Stücke bricht, wann sichs in ein Böses und Gutes Wollen scheidet; sondern der Ausgang der *Sensuum* scheidet sich nur in ein Böses und Gutes Wollen, und das Gemüth in sich bleibt ganz, und leidet, daß ein Böses und Gutes Wollen in ihm entstehe und wohne.” The verb *leiden* means *to bear* or, more directly, *to suffer*.

rise to formulations as barbarous as they are complex and expressive. The fact that Hegel proposes his own translations alongside Böhme's own terminology is an indication of the care with which he has read these passages, then proposing them to his students. The way in which Böhme dealt with the problem of the dialectical relationship between identity and difference is, according to Hegel, the most significant contribution of this form of mysticism to the evolution of philosophical thought. Hegel's attempt to direct Böhme's imagery toward the purity of the concept is therefore a clear recognition of the important philosophical content with which they are invested in the albeit confused vision of the "first German philosopher".

The study of the manuscripts compiled by the students therefore provides a new picture in relation to Hegel's approach to Böhme's writings, an approach that doesn't stop at his observation of their formal barbarity but makes important distinctions (*Barbarei* as incapacity but also as expressive effort) and results in a translation experiment that reflects the intent to read Böhme's text from a philosophical point of view. Having established these points of reference starting off from the problem of Böhme's language, we will devote the last section of this study to Hegel's interpretation of the dialectical movement of Jakob Böhme's mysticism and in particular to Böhme's densest representation of speculative meaning: Lucifer.

3.2 *Trinity, Movement and Speculation*

The conception of negativity is the underlying theme running through the various phases of Hegel's interpretation of Böhme's thought. In relation to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and especially those on the *Philosophy of Religion* it now remains to explore the problem in its complexity, returning to and expanding on various elements already mentioned. In his lectures, Hegel discusses in detail Böhme's representations, considered above, beginning from *Urteil* which – as we have already seen – is directly connected to the question regarding the origin of Evil. The study of this complex galaxy of themes (divine separation, the generation of Lucifer/of the Son/of the *Separator*) makes it possible not only to link together Hegel's passages already considered into one single and consistent sphere of research on Böhme's negativity, but also leads in the last analysis to a more accurate definition of what, according to Hegel, is the speculative quality of the shoemaker's thought, and how it is linked to the communication of the *Mysterium* (a word we will have to consider once more). The path we will follow in this section will start off with an analysis of Böhme's presence in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*; we will then develop the fundamental themes, constructing a series of parallels with the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

It is necessary, at the outset, to make several observations on the various available editions of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. The reconstruction by Jaeschke of two courses in *Philosophy of Religion* (1824 and 1827), together with the publication of Hegel's manuscript (1821), made it possible for the first time

to compare the content of the various course years.¹⁸⁶ If this comparison is made with specific reference to Jakob Böhme, it can be seen that the references to the shoemaker increase and become more structured in the course of 1827.¹⁸⁷ In particular, Hegel dedicates an increasing amount of space to Böhme's conception of the negative, closely linked to the representation of the Divine as Trinity, demonstrating the fact that Hegel is once again giving a far from secondary role to the representations from *Theosophia Revelata*, regarding them as important sources of inspiration, and integrating them into his own reasoning, starting from the representation of Evil.

3.2.1 The Serpent's Truth: Division, Knowledge and Self-Consciousness

Proceeding in chronological order, the first reference to Böhme appears in Hegel's manuscript of 1821, containing notes for the preparation of the course in the *Philosophy of Religion*. We shall start off, however, not from this short reference – though we will be returning to it later – but from Hegel's comment about a “profound history”, namely the biblical account of the temptation of Adam by the serpent, set out in the pages immediately after. In the manuscript of 1821 the interpretation of the biblical story interacts with an important reference to the figure of Böhme's Lucifer, a passage he would return to and re-elaborate in the 1824 version. The treatment of original sin in Hegel's manuscript can therefore be seen as the basis for the discussion that would later be developed (including also Böhme's theory) in relation to the role of Lucifer as a negative element in the Divine. In a series of brief notes, Hegel outlines various fundamental characteristics that he ascribes to the concept of Evil, embodied in the biblical story by the action of the serpent.¹⁸⁸ This interpretation of Evil, of the Negative, is the starting point that enables us to understand from what perspective Hegel introduces the references to Böhme when he returns to discuss the same verses of *Genesis* during the following years, then developing a line of thought between 1824 and 1827 that seems to be based on several key concepts of Böhme's philosophy.

Let us consider first of all the summary of the biblical story in question as outlined by Hegel in his notes:

α) Adam in Paradise – Garden of the animals; eaten from the tree of *knowledge* [*Erkennen*] of Evil and Good; β) serpent said: You will become like God: δ) at first they became through this finite, mortal and at the same time ε) God said: “Look, Adam has become like us; he knows what is good and what is evil”. I (Deep Story – Minor point α) God *prohibited* to eat

¹⁸⁶ Cf. V 3, lxvi and lxxi. According to Jaeschke there are substantial differences between the early lectures in the *Philosophy of Religion* and the later cycles (cf. for example *ibid.*, xvii–xviii).

¹⁸⁷ But it is important to emphasize that the 1824 and 1827 courses were reconstructed by Jaeschke on the basis of a selection of *Nachschriften* still available, whereas many notebooks have been lost.

¹⁸⁸ On the interpretative tradition that has led to the association between the serpent and Satan – an association that is not immediately apparent from the text of *Genesis* – cf. Kelly (2006).

it. However this deflection from the Idea is something which *should* not be, in the sense that is to be sublated).¹⁸⁹

Hegel underlines the word *Erkennen*¹⁹⁰ – the link between temptation and the serpent’s promise (“You will become like God”) is the focal point of the discussion. Having eaten the forbidden fruit Adam has become mortal, but he has also acquired a divine quality, namely the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent therefore hasn’t lied, though he is often portrayed as a deceiver. The 1824 course explains that the divine comment (“Look, Adam has become like us”) mustn’t be understood ironically but literally: Adam has truly become like God thanks to the fruit from the tree.¹⁹¹

Moreover, this is not a tree that bears ordinary fruit (it is therefore ridiculous, in Hegel’s view, to dwell upon the eating of apples)¹⁹² but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Good and evil are “absolute, substantial determinations of the spirit” and their appearance in the representation suddenly guides the discussion to a deeper level.¹⁹³ Yet at the same time, with the introduction of definitions of “good” and “evil”, the narrative reaches a critical point which takes the form of an insurmountable contradiction: God forbids Adam to eat the fruit and in this way he deprives him of access to cognition, “but *it is this cognition*, which constitutes the *nature of spirit* – otherwise he is a beast”. And it continues: “this cognition – the serpent promises – *should make him like God*”.¹⁹⁴ The serpent thus offers man the possibility itself of attaining knowledge, a possibility that God had excluded. Given that cognition is the element of which the “nature of the spirit” is made, it must be concluded that the serpent is offering Adam a way of escaping from the bestial and unconscious state in which he is a victim in the Garden of Eden, and of rising up to the level of the spirit. The role of the serpent becomes extremely complex at this point: Adam becomes like God *thanks to the serpent*, who helps him in achieving that which is “divine in man”. The action of the serpent doesn’t seem to be *Verführung* (temptation), but true *Führung* (guidance) for the man to discover his own divine possibilities. Hegel thus adds that it is the knowledge of good and evil

¹⁸⁹ Cf. V 5, 40: “α) Adam im Paradies – Garten der Tiere; vom Baume des *Erkennens* des Bösen und Guten gegessen; β) Schlange gesagt: Ihr werdet Gott gleich werden; δ) sie sind erstlich Endliche, Sterbliche dadurch geworden, und zugleich ε) Gott sprach: “Siehe, Adam ist worden wie unser einer; er weiß, was gut und böse ist”. I (Tiefe Geschichte – Nebensache α) Gott *verboten*, ihn zu essen. Allerdings ist diese Abweichung von der Idee etwas, das nicht sein *soll*, in dem Sinne, daß es aufgehoben werden soll).”

¹⁹⁰ On translating the words *Erkennen* and *Erkenntnis* into English see *Encyclopedia Logic*, xl–xlii. Cf. also *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 205. I tend to render *Erkenntnis* with *cognition*, unless the reference is specifically to the biblical tree of knowledge of good and evil (but some overlap is inevitable, especially when dealing with the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*).

¹⁹¹ Cf. V 5, 139.

¹⁹² Cf. *ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 41.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: “aber *diese Erkenntnis ist es*, die die *Natur des Geistes* ausmacht – sonst ist er Vieh; [...] diese Erkenntnis, verspricht die Schlange, *soll ihn Gott gleich machen*”.

that constitutes what is divine in man,¹⁹⁵ indicating that the first man became to all intents and purposes the *image of God* only through being tempted by the serpent.¹⁹⁶ Adam therefore obtains awareness of his divine nature (which consists of the capacity to *know*) by disobeying God's order and following the path of the serpent. Access to knowledge therefore inevitably involves an act of non-obedience, and therefore a wrong.

From this analysis of the speculative content of the biblical account, Hegel concludes that the appearance of the serpent is equivalent to the emergence of *consciousness* (*Bewußtsein*), and this happens through the *knowledge of good and evil*.¹⁹⁷ The course in 1824 expresses this link in very clear terms: "in this representation lies the relationship of the being-evil with cognition. *This is an essential point*".¹⁹⁸ The bond between the evil-being and knowledge is the pivot around which the whole of Hegel's commentary revolves.¹⁹⁹

The birth of consciousness is accompanied by a specific feeling: guilt. Hegel identifies a particular powerful point of friction in this description: that which is divine in man is also that which *shouldn't have been* and was obtained against God's will in accordance with the will of the Evil One. Yet – and here Hegel repeats a concept we have already considered – only thanks to the opposition created by Evil is it possible to fully express a will, and thus Hegel links once again the conception of Evil with those of consciousness (*Bewußtsein*), cognition (*Erkenntnis/Erkennen*) and will (*Wille*).²⁰⁰ Further on, we read that the serpent embodies nothing less than the "principle of knowledge".²⁰¹

In a passage in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* it was stated in this regard that a separation is necessary so that God can become aware of his own will and thus gain true knowledge. In other words, *Ichts* – a Böhmanian term that Hegel 'translated' not surprisingly as "self-consciousness in the spirit" – must emerge from *Nichts*. As we can see, the interpretation of *Genesis* outlined in these notes in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* shows immediate points of contact with Böhme's treatment of negativity. In the 1821 manuscript, the temptation is again interpreted as an act of breaking away, of separation: the serpent is the birth of consciousness, because in fact "separation is consciousness".²⁰² The image of the serpent therefore expresses that same division that is transmitted from Böhme's conception of *Ichts* into Hegel's interpretation. It will be remembered, furthermore, that earlier in the *Zusatz* to paragraph 248 of the *Encyclopedia*, the fall of Lucifer,

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹⁸ I quote from *Werke* 12, 215 (but see the same passage in also V 5, 137): "In dieser Vorstellung liegt der Zusammenhang des Böseseyns mit der Erkenntniß. *Dies ist ein wesentlicher Punkt.*"

¹⁹⁹ Cf. in this respect V 5., 209, where God's act of dividing itself through the generation of his son is defined as "absolute judgment" ("das absolute Urteil").

²⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 40.

²⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 44.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 43: "Trennung ist Bewußtsein". See also *ibid.*, 226.

or the transition to the side of Evil, was described as “the moment of distinction” (“das Moment des Unterschiedes”).²⁰³ We can therefore establish from here on that, from Hegel’s point of view, the serpent in *Genesis* and Böhme’s representations of the divine division (*Ichts, Luzifer*) share certain basic features: in both cases the Evil is linked to the emergence of consciousness, since it creates a state of division from which all knowledge is derived. In the course of 1824, we read in this regard that an animal, a plant or a stone cannot be called evil because there is no evil where there is no separation into two (*Entzweiung*).²⁰⁴ Man is the only creature divided in himself, and it is from this internal scission, which the biblical account represents with the feeling of guilt, that consciousness is generated. The separation is at the same time understood by Hegel as the affirmation of freedom. In the 1821 notes, at the end of the comment on *Genesis*, Hegel writes that the whole discussion is linked “to the concept of freedom”. The story of Adam and of the serpent repeats the “story of human freedom”.²⁰⁵ Inherent therefore in freedom is division: Adam in fact divides himself from his creator, thus affirming himself and the freedom of his own awareness against God, perceived for the first time as an external entity. The serpent has a specific role to play in this picture: to use a Böhman word, we could call him the *Separator*, the one who brings about the division.

Yet this scission mustn’t be construed as the formation of two distinct and mutually independent entities, whose link has been cut forever by the *Separator*. It is instead a process of *collision*, consisting of a movement of separation which doesn’t rule out a movement in the reverse direction, namely the attempt at reunion. In other words – as Hegel concludes at the end of this section of the 1821 manuscript – the true problem does not involve conceiving the separation between God and the Devil or between God and Adam by means of the serpent (therefore the will of God in relation to the freedom of Adam), but in thinking of their possible union.²⁰⁶ If Evil is conceived within God, and the rebellion of Adam in the heart of divine will, the two opposing terms collide with each other; this collision leads to the conflict (*Streit*) we have already described.

In order to take a closer look at this notion of Evil as the origin of division, of knowledge and of freedom, we will now consider certain relevant passages from the course of 1824. The serpent of *Genesis* and Böhme’s Lucifer play an important role in understanding the negative moment in the section entitled “The Second Element”. Introducing the reference to Böhme, the text establishes two different points of view on the essence of the Divine. From the first perspective, God is immobile in his eternal truth (one might think of the term *Abstraktum* with which Hegel translated the image of the divine “dark valley”); the second perspective overturns this equilibrium and presents a phase of division. This version of the lectures states: “Later on a fall [*Abfall*] occurred, as it is called; this is the positing of the second standpoint,

²⁰³ Cf. above, Chap. 3, Sect. 2.1.2.

²⁰⁴ Cf. V 5, 138.

²⁰⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 44.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *ibid.*: “Kollision α) das Böse mit Gottes Voraussehen, Güte, Willen usf., göttlichen absoluten Willen mit menschlicher Freiheit zu vereinigen”.

on the one hand the analysis of the son, the keeping separate both moments which are contained in him.”²⁰⁷ Two moments are attributed to the figure of the Son, which are contained within this figure and could be interpreted as union and division in relation to the Divine as contemplated from the first perspective.²⁰⁸ But the use of the verb *fallen*, to fall, shows that Hegel seeks to suggest a halving within the Son himself, which is Christ but also the fallen angel Lucifer. Two opposing figures therefore meet in the person of the Son, who are united by their position in relation to the Father or the Creator: both figures represent a separation of the Divine, who, in generating his own Son, is himself mirrored in an Other, in his Other: “Jakob Böhme then has the representation that Lucifer, the first born, fell and that in his place another son was begotten”.²⁰⁹ As we have already noted, the fact that Lucifer – not Christ – is the firstborn has particular relevance in Böhme’s philosophy: the division between God and the Devil thus assumes a key role. As Hegel recalls, a second Son has indeed been generated according to Böhme *in place of* the first fallen Son, Lucifer,²¹⁰ almost to fill the space left by him.²¹¹

This reference to Böhme brings the discussion to the role of the serpent in the story of *Genesis* and the veracity of the promise made to Adam. If the serpent hadn’t lied then it would be necessary to explain what is the meaning of the words pronounced by God: “Behold, [Adam] is become as one of us”. This implies assuming a shift in the figure of Adam:

but the higher explanation is that by this Adam is understood the second Adam, Christ. Cognition is the principle of spirituality, which – as was said – is also the principle of healing the damage of the separation. In this principle of cognition is posited also the principle of divinity, which through further compensation must come to its reconciliation, truthfulness.²¹²

In the same way as Böhme’s Lucifer is regarded as the first Son of God, Hegel considers the transition from the first to the second Adam as the result of the

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 133: “Späterhin ist ein Abfall eingetreten, wie es heißt; dies ist das Setzen des zweiten Standpunkts, einerseits die Analyse des Sohnes, das Auseinanderhalten der beiden Momente, die in ihm enthalten sind.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 200.

²⁰⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 133.

²⁰⁹ Cf. *ibid.*: “Jakob Böhme hat so die Vorstellung, Luzifer, der Erstgeborene, sei gefallen, und an seiner Stelle ein anderer Sohn erzeugt.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 200.

²¹⁰ W. Jaeschke refers to *Aurora*, ch. 12, 36 and ch. 14, 36 (cf. V 5, 343–344). Böhme’s writings also contain the theory according to which man was created to fill the space left empty by Lucifer: the very existence of man then becomes a consequence of the fall of Lucifer. In this respect see: Koyré (1929), 160.

²¹¹ It should be pointed out in this respect that in Manichean cosmogony Christ himself assumes the role occupied by the serpent tempter in the Judaic-Christian tradition (cf. Jonas (1964), 222).

²¹² I quote from *Werke* 12, 217 (but see the same passage in V 5, 139): “Die höhere Erklärung aber ist, daß unter diesem Adam der zweite Adam, Christus verstanden ist. Die Erkenntniß ist das Princip der Geistigkeit, die aber, wie gesagt, auch das Princip der Heilung des Schadens der Trennung ist. Es ist in diesem Princip des Erkennens auch das Princip der Göttlichkeit gesetzt, das durch fernere Ausgleichung zu seiner Versöhnung, Wahrhaftigkeit kommen muß.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 207.

temptation by the serpent, which shows Adam the way to attain knowledge, in other words the “principle of divinity” (“Prinzip der Göttlichkeit”). Adam’s spiritual transformation, from the first man into Christ, therefore takes place through temptation and sin: already present in the “principle of knowledge” (embodied in the serpent) is the “principle of divinity”; it is the collision between these two principles that leads to Adam’s metamorphosis into Christ. Hegel concludes from it that the wound opened up by the Evil One, which separates Adam from the will of his Creator, is – at one and the same time – injury and the beginning of recovery, disaster and its cure. The scission performed by the serpent in fact contains within it the need for reconciliation (*Versöhnung*), which will lead back to a condition of equilibrium (*Ausgleichung*). The devilish beginning of knowledge, having originated through scission, will evolve in this way until it reaches its veracity (*Wahrhaftigkeit*). Christ, in other words, is contained within the very action of the Devil.²¹³ Through this interpretation, Hegel has therefore incorporated Böhme’s image of the scission between God and his opposite within his own reasoning, for the purpose of explaining the deepest significance of the equality between Christ and Adam after his sin, a problem that had already occupied him in the manuscript of 1821. The reference to Böhme’s Lucifer in the 1824 lectures takes him to the following conclusion: “In the analysis of this Other is therefore contained this Other itself, but not posited. But the other side is then what we have called subjective consciousness, the side of finite spirit, that this, as pure thinking, be in itself the process that has begun from what is immediate and has elevated itself to truth.”²¹⁴ Beginning with the initial immobile immediacy the fall of the angel has started up a *process* whose ultimate end is the elevation to truth. Such truth is therefore the fruit of mediation, represented by the rebellion of Lucifer – or of Adam tempted by the serpent, according to this interpretation by Hegel. Böhme’s Lucifer thus becomes in Hegel’s commentary the mediating element that leads to overcoming immediacy and, ultimately, to the reaching of truth. As if to say: not only has the serpent *spoken the truth* but it *also leads to truth*.

We might think of the *Qualität-Qual-Quelle* word-game that Hegel repeatedly quotes: the movement of *quality* is in fact generated from the root of torment (*Qual*) which it contains, a torment that in the last analysis is a source of life (*Quelle*).

²¹³ On the presence of the affirmative principle within the negative principle, see Milton’s description of the Devil in *Werke* 12, 213 (cf. also V 5, 136): “Dieß Böse personificiert auf allgemeine Weise ist der Teufel. Dieser als das sich selbst wollende Negative ist darin die Identität mit sich und muß daher auch Affirmation haben, wie bei Milton, wo er seiner charactervollen Energie besser ist, als mancher Engel.” With regard to the devilish energy to which Hegel refers, see the first speech of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 204. There is also a relevant line in *Paradise Regained* in relation to Lucifer as Son of God, equal to Christ: “The Son of God I also am, or was, / And if I was, I am” (Milton (1999), 505). Lastly, see also Kelly (2006), 1, where there is an allusion to the identity between Christ and Lucifer referring to the *Revelation of St John* (22, 16).

²¹⁴ Cf. V 5, 133: “In der Analyse dieses Anderen ist also selbst dieses Andere enthalten, aber nicht gesetzt. Aber die andere Seite ist dann, was wir das subjektive Bewußtsein, die Seite des endlichen Geistes genannt haben, daß dies, als reines Denken, an sich der Prozeß sei, vom Unmittelbaren angefangen und sich zur Wahrheit erhoben hat.” My translation but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 200.

“Springing (*Quellen*), torment (*Qual*), quality (*Qualität*) are the same for him” we read in the Hotho manuscript of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1823–1824);²¹⁵ this equivalence between torment and source leads to the following conclusion: “Torment (*Qual*) is the negativity that relates itself to itself, which is absolute affirmation relating itself to itself.”²¹⁶ In the same way as the negation of torment contains within it the affirmation of the source (indeed torment and source are *the same thing*), so the fall of Lucifer sparks a movement within the divine essence, a furious movement (the struggle between God and the Devil) within which is the beginning of reconciliation (the generation of Christ). Perhaps it is no coincidence that the word *Quelle* recurs several times in Hegel’s reasoning during the 1824 course in *Philosophy of Religion*. We read for example:

The more exact way of representing this evil is that man becomes evil through cognition, as the Bible presents it, that he has eaten from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. Through this, cognition, intelligence, the theoretical, and will come into a closer relation; the nature of evil comes closer to being expressed precisely. With regard to this point it must be said that indeed it is cognition which is the source of all evil (*Böse*), since knowing, consciousness is this act through which separation is at all posited – the negative, the evil (*Übel*), the separation into two (*Entzweiung*), in the closer determination of the being-for-itself. The nature of man is not as it should be; it is cognition which opens this up to him and produces the Being as he should not be.²¹⁷

Note once again the conceptual sequence: evil as wickedness (*Böse*), cognition (*Erkenntnis*), consciousness (*Bewußtsein*), negative (*Negative*), evil as bad (*Übel*), separation into two (*Entzweiung*) and being-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*). The seed of consciousness and knowledge is rooted in Evil, the negative element that defines itself in contraposition to another (for this it is being-for-itself). In the only paragraph of the *Encyclopedia* in which Hegel refers to Böhme’s conception of negativity, it was said that *Evil* (as *Übel*) consists of the inadequacy of Being to the Ought to Be and therefore of the clash of the second with the first. The paragraph then ended with a detailed reference to the *Qual-Quelle* association, from which Böhme, according to Hegel, develops the “nature of the spirit”. In these *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Evil (as *Böse* and as *Übel*) is a *source* of knowledge (it is thanks to the serpent that Adam knows) and knowledge, at the same time, is a *source* of Evil (sin separates Adam from God and condemns him to guilt). This mirror

²¹⁵ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v: “Quellen, Qual, Qualität ist ihm dasselbe.”

²¹⁶ Ibid.: “Die Qual ist die sich auf sich beziehende Negativität, die sich auf sich beziehend absolute Affirmation ist.”

²¹⁷ I quote from *Werke* 12, 215–216 (but cf. V 5, 137–138): “Die nähere Weise der Vorstellung dieses Bösen ist, daß der Mensch durch die Erkenntnis böse werde, wie die Bibel es vorstellt, daß er vom Baume der Erkenntniß gegessen habe. Hierdurch kommt die Erkenntniß, die Intelligenz, das Theoretische, und der Wille in ein näheres Verhältnis; die Natur des Bösen kommt näher zur Sprache. Hierbei ist nun zu sagen, daß in der That die Erkenntniß es ist, welche der Quell alles Bösen ist, denn das Wissen, das Bewußtseyn ist dieser Akt, durch den die Trennung gesetzt ist, das Negative, das Uebel, die Entzweiung, in der näheren Bestimmung des Fürsichseyns überhaupt. Die Natur des Menschen ist nicht, wie sie seyn soll; die Erkenntniß ist es, die ihm dieß aufschließt und das Seyn, wie er nicht seyn soll, hervorbringt.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 205–206.

relationship between the origin of Evil and the origin of knowledge, in a profound link between *Qual* and *Quelle*, is the focal point of Hegel's reasoning.

But this is not a relationship closed in itself, with no way out. The torment of knowledge is in fact transformed into a source of truth and reconciliation when Adam becomes equal to God and, passing through the wound of separation, he returns to union with his Creator in the new form of Christ. For this reason, in a passage already quoted from the 1821 manuscript, Hegel writes: "cognition heals the wound that itself is";²¹⁸ or – as we read in the lectures of 1824 – the source of evil is also the source of reconciliation (*Versöhnung*), that is to say that "it is what makes ill and the source of health".²¹⁹ The "source of evil", likened to illness, contains *in nuce* the source of the healing. Only the disease of Lucifer – to continue the metaphor – can lead to health, which consists of the process of elaborating and mediating the truth, present at first in immediate form. In the 1827 lectures, it is stated that this phase of scission must be conceived with the greatest seriousness: we shall consider at this point to what extent the influence of Böhme's theory is developed in Hegel's treatment of the "seriousness of Being-Other"²²⁰ three years later.

3.2.2 Dialectics of Lucifer's Separation

Böhme is named twice in the 1827 lectures. In addition to the reference to the significance of the fall of Lucifer, which appears once again in this version in a reworked form, there is an important passage about Böhme's thinking on the problem of the Trinity. In this way, the picture outlined in the 1824 course becomes more detailed and complex, and the role Hegel gives to Böhme increasingly important. This is also suggested by the fact that Hegel introduces into the discussion various key terms from Böhme's language, starting from the now familiar *Urteil*. Böhme's presence in these lectures therefore seems to go far beyond the two direct references, which constitute only the most obvious moments in Hegel's reasoning, interwoven as it is with other references to the shoemaker's philosophy.

As in the 1824 lectures, the reference to Böhme's Lucifer is included in the section on the "second element". In line with what has been said before, Hegel returns to the problem of *division*. The discussion centers around how the inner separation of the idea must be understood, in particular its role in relation to the cohesion of the idea itself, its unity. In other words, Hegel returns to the theme already outlined in

²¹⁸ V 5, 42: "Erkennen heilt die Wunde, die es selber ist". On the relation between negative moment and knowledge see also Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 135r: "Eine Andere Form ist das Ja und Nein. In diesem sollen alle Dinge bestehen. Das Ja als das Eine ist Gott selber. Es wäre unerkennlich ohne das Nein. Dieses ist der Gegenwurf gegen das Ja, auf daß die Wahrheit offenbar und etwas sei. *Das Nein ist also das Prinzip alles Verstehens*" (my italics).

²¹⁹ V 5, 138–139 (cf. *Werke* 12, 216): "In dieser Trennung ist das Fürsichseyn gestzt und hat das Böse seinen Sitz, hier ist die Quelle des Uebels, aber auch der Punkt, wo die Versöhnung ihre letzte Quelle hat. Es ist das Krankmachen und die Quelle der Gesundheit."

²²⁰ Ibid., 216: "Ernsthaftigkeit des Andersseins."

previous courses: the passage from initial unity to scission (a necessary scission, as we have established) and then the possibility of a return (*Rückkehr*) to unification. This movement of division and reunion had also been described through the image of Böhme's Lucifer, a separating element that contains within it the seed of reconciliation, Christ. The 1827 lectures outline the question in the following way: "The eternal being-in-and-for-itself is this, opening oneself up, determining (*bestimmen*), judging (*urteilen*), positing oneself as distinguished from oneself, but the distinction is also eternally sublated, the being-in-and-for-itself is eternally returned to itself in it and only to this extent is it spirit."²²¹ First of all we note that the verb *urteilen* is used in the sense of *to divide* and that it is associated with the verb *bestimmen*, *to determine*. It is therefore a question of considering in what way the difference is present in the idea, since it is precisely this inner differentiation that constitutes the vitality of the spirit. The text states that the Idea contains eternally within itself the origin of the division, which is eternally overcome in a constant movement of return: "this dividing is only a movement, a playing of love with itself, in which it does not come to the seriousness of Being-Other, to separation and division into two".²²² The movement inside the Idea is a "play of love with itself" in which the difference is posited and immediately overcome: there is therefore not a radical, incisive separation but a pure circle of love. The Other which is constantly produced and reconciled is the Son, linked by a relationship of love with its own source.²²³ Yet this doesn't lead to an actual separation, to a scission that produces two distinct entities (*Entzweiung*); as a result there is not yet an adequate conception of Being-Other, as understood in its radicality, in its seriousness: in other words, the condition of Being-Other must be characterized by a problematic seriousness. The argument proceeds in this way: "In the Idea in this determination, the determination of the distinction is not yet accomplished".²²⁴ The problem therefore consists of directing the concept of division toward its completion, entrusting the figure of the Other with the destabilizing role of the divider. The role of the *Son* should therefore be reconsidered: "It is by the Son, in the determination of the distinction that the process of further determination proceeds to further distinction, that the distinction obtains its

²²¹ I quote from *Werke* 12, 205 (but see the same passage in V 5, 216): "Das ewige an und für sich Seyn ist dieß, sich aufzuschließen, zu bestimmen, zu urtheilen, sich als Unterschiedenes seiner zu setzen, aber der Unterschied ist eben so ewig aufgehoben, das an und für sich Seyende ist ewig darin in sich zurückgekehrt und nur insofern ist es Geist." My translation but see *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 291.

²²² I quote from *Werke* 12, 206 (but see the same passage in V 5, 216): "Es ist dies Unterscheiden nur eine Bewegung, ein Spiel der Liebe mit sich selbst, wo es *nicht zur Ernsthaftigkeit des Anderseins, der Trennung und Entzweiung* kommt". My translation but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 292.

²²³ Cf. V 5, 216 (cf. also the different formulation in *Werke* 12, 206): "Das Andere ist insofern bestimmt als Sohn, und das Anundfürsichseiende als Liebe".

²²⁴ I quote from *Werke* 12, 206 (but see the same passage in V 5, 216): "In der Idee in dieser Bestimmung ist die Bestimmung des Unterschieds noch nicht vollendet". My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 292.

right, the right to differentness".²²⁵ Beginning from the Son it is necessary to explicate the problem of separation, arriving at *another form of differentiation* that contains and expresses the fullness of the right expressed by the difference. After this opening observation, Hegel introduces precisely at this point of his argumentation the reference to Böhme's Lucifer, which is presented therefore as a possible answer to the question regarding the seriousness of the separation:

Jakob Böhme has expressed this transition within the moment of the Son in this way: the first inborn was Lucifer, the carrier of the light, the bright, the fair, but he imagined himself within himself, that is to say that he posited himself for himself, proceeded to Being and so fell, but the eternally begotten immediately took his place, was posited.²²⁶

Böhme's Lucifer is an example of Being-Other considered in its radical difference: through the fall of the angel, Böhme describes a process of profound and serious scission, an *Ur-Teilung* that creates an unbridgeable gap (at least at first) between the two separate entities. In this way – we might add – the Divine balance is upset, and the “play of love with itself” leaves space for a terrible conflict between God and the Devil. In the initial playful movement there is no trace of this bursting force of division – a force, we might say, that is driving toward the *collision* between opposites. This is why it is necessary to go beyond the separation in love and consider a more radical way of division.²²⁷

Hegel points out that in Böhme's interpretation Lucifer is not a static figure but a phase of transition (*Übergang*): the fall of the first Son causes a scission from which the second Son, Christ, emerges. We could therefore conclude that the “moment of the Son” is constituted by both of these figures, or rather by both divisions of which they are a representation. Böhme is therefore describing not *one* scission, but a series of scissions; however it is the first of them (the division and the clash between God and the Devil) that reveals most dramatically the “right of difference” embodied by the Other. This Other assumes the features of Lucifer, but also of Adam and finally of Christ, in accordance with the process already outlined. The world itself is also seen by Böhme as an image of this Being-Other in relation to the Creator. Like the generation of Christ, God's creation of the world is an act completely dependent upon Lucifer's transgression: the fall with which it ends leaves a vacuum at cosmic

²²⁵ I quote from *Werke* 12, 207 (but see the same passage in V 5, 218): “Es ist am Sohn, an der Bestimmung des Unterschieds, daß die Fortbestimmung zu weiterem Unterschied fortgeht, daß der Unterschied sein Recht erhält, sein Recht der Verschiedenheit.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 293. I agree with the translators of *Encyclopedia Logic* in rendering *Fortbestimmung* with “process of further determination” (339).

²²⁶ I quote from *Werke* 12, 207 (but see the same passage in V 5, 218): “Diesen Uebergang am Moment des Sohnes hat Jakob Böhm so ausgedrückt: daß der erste eingeborne, Lucifer, der Lichtträger, das Helle, das Klare gewesen, aber sich in sich hinein imaginirt, d. h. sich für sich gesetzt habe, zum Seyn fortgegangen und so abgefallen sey, aber unmittelbar sey an seine Stelle getreten, gesetzt der ewig Eingeborne.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 293.

²²⁷ On Hegel's concept of “making oneself Other” see Nancy (1998), 85–86. Whereas on the problem of the “confrontation with alterity” in Böhme, see Procesi Xella (1981), 15.

level that God had to fill by creating the world. Lucifer's rebellious action therefore leads on the one hand to the generation of Christ and on the other to the Creation.²²⁸

In the 1827 revision, Hegel uses Böhme's own description of the world as Other from God to trace an important characteristic of differentiation, namely the absolute externality of that which is separate and as such is limited, determining its own confines and those of the being from which it is distinct.²²⁹ The *Urteil* thus gives form to an Other that is real, tangible and independent from God.²³⁰ Here again, Hegel uses Böhme's philosophy to focus on the moment of the difference, at first with reference to the *Ur-Teilung* between God and his most radical opposite, the Devil, and later by introducing the world as a tangible body external to God – or indeed “without God”.²³¹

The second reference to Böhme in 1827 is introduced in a similar context of reflection, at the center of which is once again the problem of the division of the first undifferentiated unity. Böhme appears at the end of the section on the “first element”, at the point that is about to move on to the “second element”, which contains the passage we have just considered. The position of these two references clearly indicates that Hegel is using the imaginative language of Jakob Böhme to define the crucial and specific phase of the *transition* from unity to difference.

This second reference to the shoemaker is prepared by a rapid reconstruction of the way in which the Neoplatonists, but “above all the heretics, and especially the Gnostics”, interpreted and expressed through images this same transition from hidden and indefinite Divine to separate and revealed God.²³² Hegel states at the beginning that the Pythagoreans and Plato had already laid the basis for conceiving the problem of division and reconciliation through the number sequence 1-2-3 but without managing to go beyond a “pure abstraction” in the way this triad is

²²⁸ The problem of the creation of the world is one of the crucial and most complex aspects of the philosophy of Jakob Böhme, about which a detailed explanation cannot be given here. See therefore, for example, Koyré (1929) 160: “Que Lucifer ne cherche point à se disculper en prétendant que son action a eu néanmoins des conséquences heureuses, et, notamment la création de ce monde et de l'homme. Lucifer a raison: sans lui l'homme n'existerait point, puisqu'il a été créé justement pour remplacer dans l'armée céleste les anges déçus du prince de ce monde, pour prendre leur place tout comme la sienne est prise par le Roi Christ.”

²²⁹ I quote from *Werke* 12, 208 (but see the same passage in V 5, 218): “Dieses Andere haben wir so auf diesem Standpunkt nicht als Sohn, sondern als äußerliche Welt, als die endliche Welt, die außer der Wahrheit ist, Welt der Endlichkeit, wo das Andere die Form zu seyn und doch ist es seiner Natur nach nur das *ἕτερον*, das Bestimmte, das Unterschiedene, Beschränkte, Negative.” Cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 293. Hegel returns to the problem of the creation of the world according to Böhme in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* that deal with Descartes, where it is written: “nach Böhme hat Gott die Materie der Welt aus sich selbst genommen” (*Werke* 15, 351, but cf. TWA 20, 142). Also in relation to Hegel's interpretation of the creation of the world in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* see Borghesi (1996), 81.

²³⁰ Cf. also V 5, 217.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² For a further study of this aspect of Hegel's criticism of Neoplatonism see Halfwassen (2003), 31–47.

understood:²³³ “It was especially with the heretics, principally Gnostics, that the consciousness of this truth rose up – the idea of the triunity – but they delivered this content in turbid, imaginary representations.”²³⁴ The tripartite movement of the Idea, about which the Neoplatonists and the Gnostics had an intuition, is nothing less than the “consciousness of truth”, an expression that immediately connects up with Hegel’s comment on *Genesis*, in which the action of the serpent symbolized the very birth of consciousness and the first movement toward truth. This passage can also be read within the same frame of reference outlined earlier in relation to Hegel’s interpretation of Neoplatonic philosophical mysticism. The reference to Böhme in the 1827 lectures provides an opportunity for Hegel to add at this point what he had already stated about the mysticism of the Neoplatonists, pointing out the implications with regard to the role played by the Teutonic philosopher. The discussion on the function of Lucifer and the double aspect in the figure of the Son, to which Hegel gives particular attention in his reading of *Theosophia Revelata*, provide the essential elements from which to start. In Hegel’s reconstruction, the Neoplatonists and Gnostics have variously described the God that *precedes* all differentiation in these terms: “the one, the Father, the $\delta\upsilon\nu$, which is spoken of as abyss, depth, that is indeed what is still empty, impossible to grasp, inconceivable, what is above all concepts”.²³⁵ The second moment introduces the division, the determination and at the same time the activity inside the initial, empty, abstract and totally inconceivable divine essence. This phase has been described in the philosophies in question as the pronouncement of the word or as the expression of divine knowledge, wisdom: “This second, the Being-Other, the determining, pre-eminently the activity of determining oneself, is the most universal determination as $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, the activity to determine rationally, also the word”.²³⁶

This same progression from the One (the Father, the Abstract, the Profundity) to the Being-Other of the second moment, through which the Divine determines itself, is also set out in Hegel’s 1821 manuscript, which presents the “speculative idea” according to which the nature of man is in his divine essence. This idea was developed by pagan and Christian philosophers in formulations of greater or lesser *purity*, which share the speculative content they seek to express, that is to say the idea of the separation and at the same time of the interpenetration of man and God. It is in this

²³³ Cf. *Werke* 12, 201: “Bei den *Pythagoräern* und *Plato* findet sich die abstrakte Grundlage der Idee, aber die Bestimmungen sind ganz in dieser Abstraktion geblieben”. Cf. also V 5, 212.

²³⁴ I quote from *Werke* 12, 201 (but see the same passage in V 5, 212): “Besonders waren es Häretiker, vornehmlich die Gnostiker, in denen dieses Bewußtseyn der Wahrheit aufgegangen ist – die Idee des Dreieinigen – die aber diesen Inhalt zu trüben, phantastischen Vorstellungen gebracht haben.” My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 287.

²³⁵ I quote from *Werke* 12, 201 (but see the only slightly different formulation in V 5, 213): “das Eine, der Vater, das $\delta\upsilon\nu$, was als Abgrund, Tiefe, d.i. eben das noch Leere, Unfaßbare, Unbegreifliche ausgesagt worden, das über aller Begriffe ist.” Cf. also *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 288.

²³⁶ I quote from *Werke* 12, 202 (but cf. the slightly different formulation in V 5, 213): “Dieses Zweite, das Andersseyn, Bestimmen, überhaupt die Thätigkeit sich zu bestimmen ist die allgemeinste Bestimmung als $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, die vernünftig bestimmende Thätigkeit, auch das Wort.” Cf. also *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 288.

very discussion that Hegel names Böhme. The text reappears in the 1827 lectures, offering the possibility of a comparison:

Thereby it has been determined as the original image of man, Adam Kadmon, the inborn; this is not something accidental, rather eternal activity, not merely [restricted] to one time: in God there is only one birth, the activity as eternal activity, a determination, which itself belongs essentially to the universal. [...] The essential is that this σοφία, the inborn also remains in God's womb, the difference is therefore no difference.²³⁷

The cabalistic figure of *Adam Kadmon*, the cosmic man, a primordial image of man, is used by Hegel as an example of the first separation within the Divine. According to Hegel the Gnostic-Cabalistic doctrines describe the separation in a wholly particular manner: that which is divided in fact remains within the being of God, so that an actual scission does not take place. The division therefore takes the form of an activity carried out eternally by God, having once left the initial undifferentiated state; and yet the fruit of the division remains "in the womb of God".²³⁸ In Hegel's notes of 1821 we read in this regard:

to grasp the relation of human and divine nature in a philosophically speculative way, however, in pure thoughts, is to be mentioned that namely the *first man*, that is man per se, was grasped by them [the philosophers, partly heretics, partly Christians] as inborn, Son of God, as the moment of God's objectivation in the divine Idea – Adam Kadmon, J. Böhme, *Logos*, *Urmensch*.²³⁹

Without referring to a particular concept in Böhman theory, Hegel's manuscript associates Böhme with the Neoplatonic doctrine of the emanation of the *logos* and the Cabalistic doctrine of the original man: these are various ways of representing divine objectification.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ I quote from *Werke* 12, 202–203 (but see the same passage in V 5, 213, with only one difference ("die Tat als ewige Tätigkeit", instead of "die Thätigkeit als ewige Thätigkeit"): "Damit ist es bestimmt worden als Urbild des Menschen, Adam Kadmon, der Eingeborne; das ist nicht ein Zufälliges, sondern ewige Thätigkeit, nicht zu einer Zeit bloß: in Gott ist nur Eine Geburt, die Thätigkeit als ewige Thätigkeit, eine Bestimmung, die zum Allgemeinen wesentlich selbst gehört. [...] Das Wesentliche ist, daß diese σοφία, der Eingeborne, ebenso im Schoße Gottes, bleibt, der Unterschied also keiner ist." Cf. also *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 288.

²³⁸ In relation to Hegel's interpretation of Zoroastrian Gnosticism, which regards the opposites of light and darkness (embodied by Ormuzd and Ahriman) as completely distinct elements, see the *Lectures on Aesthetics* (TWA 13, 421 et seq.) It should be pointed out that according to Hegel the clash between opposites in Zoroastrian Gnosticism does not reach a true dialectical level (as happens however in the case of Jakob Böhme), because light and darkness are represented as two extremes that struggle only for supremacy over each other. Cf. also Hodgson (2005), 138.

²³⁹ V 5, 36: "das Verhältnis der menschlichen und göttlichen Natur philosophisch spekulativ jedoch, in reinen Gedanken aufzufassen, ist anzuführen, daß nämlich der *erste Mensch*, d. i. der Mensch an sich, von ihnen [den Philosophen, teils Heiden, teils Christen] als Eingeborener, Sohn Gottes aufgefaßt worden, als das Moment der Objektivierung Gottes in der göttlichen Idee – Adam Kadmon, J. Böhme, *Logos*, *Urmensch*." My translation, but see also *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 99. Cf. also V 8, 173.

²⁴⁰ On the meaning of *Adam Kadmon* (or *Qadmon*) in the doctrine of Cabala see Scholem (2001), 299. Cf. also the detailed article on *Adam Kadmon* available on the internet at: <http://www.jewish-encyclopedia.com>.

The fact that Böhme is not mentioned at this point in the 1827 notes may not be incidental.²⁴¹ In these lectures Böhme is in fact mentioned a little further on, where his theory of the Trinity as Divine revelation is considered as a clear innovation in comparison with the philosophical traditions that Hegel had earlier discussed. Böhme's absence in association with Neoplatonism and the Cabala, and his inclusion in a new paragraph on the importance of his concept of the Trinity may indicate a development in Hegel's interpretation.

As we have seen, the Neoplatonic *logos* and Cabalistic *Adam Kadmon* express a Divine scission which at the same time isn't such at all. Returning to the reference to Böhme's Lucifer in the section on the "second element" in the 1827 course, we could say that in these two cases the separation does not lead to the formation of a real, tangible Other, as happens in the creation of the world according to the Teutonic philosopher cited by Hegel. Starting off from this crucial difference in the way of conceiving alterity – the Other is not independent in the first case (Neoplatonics and Gnostics), whereas it asserts its total freedom in the second (Böhme) – it is possible to understand why Hegel distinguishes Böhme from these first formulations of the divine movement, which are incomplete just like the "play of love with itself" already discussed. The reference to Böhme's Trinity in the 1827 lectures reads: "Jakob Böhme was the first to acknowledge the Trinity in a different way, as universal. The modality of his representing, of his thought, is more imaginary and wild; he did not elevate himself to pure forms of thought. But the dominant foundation of his striving, of his struggle, was to recognize the Trinity in everything and everywhere".²⁴² We note in particular the opening words of this passage: "Jakob Böhme was *the first*". Hegel recognizes that in the shoemaker's primitive representations there is indeed a desire to elaborate the concept of the Trinity as a movement of expression of the Divine divided into three spaces of time, where an initial phase is followed by the *Ur-Teilung*, which then brings into motion the possibility of return. Such desire turns into an actual conflict – a conflict of the mystic against his own language to express the conflict of God against the Other separate from him. The division is therefore conceived, for the first time in the history of philosophy, as a crucial element that generates an actual collision.

Quoting from *Aurora*, the 1827 notes also record that Böhme interprets the Trinity as a structure in movement, and that this triadic movement is observed by the philosopher in every living thing that exists, in nature as in the heart of man.²⁴³ The form of the Trinity is therefore *generalized* in the sense that Böhme detects a triadic pattern in the motion of Divine revelation which also forms the basis of life itself.

²⁴¹ It must obviously be remembered that W. Jaeschke used only three manuscripts (apart from the Lasson edition) in reconstructing the course of 1827.

²⁴² V 5, 214: "Jakob Böhme war der erste, der die Dreieinigkeit auf eine andere Weise, als allgemein, anerkannte. Die Weise seines Vorstellens, seines Denkens ist mehr phantastisch und wild; er hat sich nicht zu reinen Formen des Denkens erhoben. Aber die herrschende Grundlage seines Gärens, seines Kampfes ist die gewesen, die Dreieinigkeit in allem und überall zu erkennen." My translation, but cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 289.

²⁴³ Cf. V 5, 355.

In other words, the division and the conflict with the Other is understood as a inescapable phase not just in producing a vital conception of God: this inner conflict itself with the element of the negative is what enables life to exist, which is therefore based on a permanent conflict with a limit of negativity.

In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel repeatedly refers to *Aurora* with regard to this speculative separation at the basis of all that is living, a speculation that divides and generates movement.²⁴⁴ This movement of the triad²⁴⁵ in God and in nature indeed constitutes, according to Hegel, the *Hauptgedanke*, the main thought in Böhme's philosophy.

3.2.3 The Speculative Mystery of Evil

In the second chapter of this work we examined what, in Hegel's view, were indirect points of contact between Neoplatonism and Böhme's philosophy: in brief, in both cases they are *mystical* approaches based on a use of speculation from which the movement of thought is generated. The notion of excessive enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*) constitutes the heart of this reasoning and the most obvious link between Böhme and the Neoplatonists. But the reading of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (in the 1827 version) raised a subtle difference between the two philosophies with regard to the way in which separation is understood: the radical nature of the scission (i.e. of the Evil) is not adequately expressed in the process of emanation on which the Neoplatonic doctrine is based; Böhme's principal merit, according to Hegel, is indeed that of placing the dramatic seriousness of the difference (*Urteil*) at the basis of his mystical approach. In other words, Böhme's philosophy represents a form of mysticism that makes fuller and deeper use of the means of the separation and of the speculative movement that derives from it.

In his 1825–1826 course in the *History of Philosophy*, Hegel compares the Neoplatonist conception of the One with the hidden God (the “dark valley”) in Böhme's interpretation: “He talks of the simple essence, of the hidden God, as we have seen in the Neoplatonists. This First is also called the *temperamentum*, a Being-Neutralized, also the great Salitter, and this is the Hidden, the not yet revealed”.²⁴⁶ The Neoplatonists' One and Böhme's hidden God represent the Divine before its revelation, at the moment in which it is closed within itself in the perfect equilibrium of its inner neutrality (Hegel *translates* Böhme's *temperamentum* as *Being-Neutralized*). An element of similarity is thus established between the two theories. But at the same time Hegel reveals a peculiar characteristic of this hidden

²⁴⁴ See for example V 9, 82–83.

²⁴⁵ Böhme uses the term *Dreiheit* (*triad*) alongside the more common *Dreieinigkeit* (*Trinity*). Cf. AuN, 189, note 55.

²⁴⁶ V 9, 82: “Er [Böhme] spricht von der einfachen Essenz, vom verborgenen Gott, wie wir dies bei den Neuplatonikern gesehen haben. Dies Erste heißt auch das *temperamentum*, ein Neutralisiertsein, auch der große Salitter, und dieser ist der Verborgene, der noch nicht Geoffenbarte.” Cf. *History of Phil.*, 98.

God of Böhme's: it *tends* indeed to divide internally between the two absolute opposites, a division that occurs in the ways already outlined. The initial Being-Neutralized is not in reality a phase of calm but the moment before the most radical scission. This *first* form of the Divine already contains within it the conflict between God and his Other, which is a violent struggle and not a process of emanation. Hegel investigates this particular nature of Böhme's hidden God in this way:

The First is thus God the Father, completely the First, and this First is at the same time essentially divided in itself and is the unity of both of these; God is everything, darkness and light, love and wrath, but he calls himself one God only according to the light of his love; it is an eternal *contrarium* between darkness and light; none of them seizes the other, indeed it is *per se* one essence only.²⁴⁷

Within the initial divine unity there is already an inherent "eternal *contrarium*": light and darkness, love and fury tend to emerge from the neutralization (from the *temperamentum*) and to take form, one beside the other and one against the other.

The way in which these opposites take on life in the heart of the Divine is profoundly different from Neoplatonic emanation. The inner opposition is in fact permanent and head-on – the Other cannot be cancelled out and silenced – yet this attrition between the opposites does not prevent the divine Essence from being and remaining only one. This brings to mind the process of *collision* to which Hegel referred in his notes for the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*: the problem is in conceiving the opposites as one within the other, not as indifferent absolutes but as parts of a single movement, and therefore the serpent's truth as part of the divine truth. The Hotho manuscript of 1823–1824 describes the problem in these words: "The main striving of Jakob Böhme is the absolute divine unity and the unification of all opposites in God. God is the totality of all opposites, but as unity: there is a constant *Contrarium* between the opposites, and yet it is only one unity."²⁴⁸ This conception of the generation and role of opposites within the divine totality distinguishes Böhme from the Neoplatonists and is, according to Hegel, the fundamental, decisive element in Böhme's philosophy that confirms his innovative importance in the history of philosophical thought.²⁴⁹ In the 1825–1826 course, the passage quoted

²⁴⁷ Ibid.: "Das Erste ist also Gott der Vater, das Erste überhaupt, und dieses Erste ist zugleich wesentlich in sich unterschieden und ist die Einheit dieser beiden; Gott ist Alles, Finsternis und Licht, Liebe und Zorn, aber er nennt sich allein einen Gott nach dem Licht seiner Liebe; es ist ein ewiges *contrarium* zwischen Finsternis und Licht; keines von beiden ergreift das Andere, es ist doch schlechthin nur ein einiges Wesen." See also *ibid.*, 276 with regard to the passages of Böhme to which Hegel refers.

²⁴⁸ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v: "Das Hauptstreben Jacob Böhms ist die absolute göttliche Einheit und die Vereinigung aller Gegensätze in Gott. Gott ist die Totalität aller Gegensätze[,] aber als Einheit: Ein stetes *Contrarium* ist unter den Gegensätzen, und dennoch ist nur eine Einheit."

²⁴⁹ In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* dedicated to Spinoza, Hegel accuses Spinoza's substance of being immobile, rigid, and makes this significant comment: "Die Substanz bleibt in der Starrheit, Versteinigung, ohne Böhme'sches Quellen. Die einzelnen Bestimmungen in Form von Verstandesbestimmungen sind keine Böhm'schen Quellgeister, die in einander arbeiten und aufgehen." (I quote from *Werke* 15, 377, but cf. also TWA 20, 166). Hegel therefore recalls the play on words *Quelle/Qual* to underline the fact that Spinoza's substance is lacking in that vitality that characterizes the 'separate God' of Jakob Böhme. On Hegel as interpreter of Spinoza, see Bartuschat (2007), 101–115.

above continues with a crucial statement on which we have already commented: “The principle of the concept is wholly vital in Jakob Böhme”.²⁵⁰ The conflict between opposites is responsible for the vitality that Hegel attributes to Böhme’s concept. *Vitality* is certainly the noun which, in Hegel’s view, best describes Böhme’s approach, and for this reason it returns at various times in these lectures.

A little later in the text we read: “The lightning, the *Separator* rises up in God the Father, and it is from this Separator that *the living God* is born”.²⁵¹ Hegel dwells on the moment of scission in Böhme’s conception of the Divine, namely on the role of the *Separator*, thanks to which the hidden God becomes a *living* God. The *Separator* is revealed as a *Blitz*, lightning that illuminates and divides the dark profundity of the Father. The spark of the *Separator* springs forth directly in God the Father,²⁵² and it will be remembered that the function of the *Separator* is attributed first of all to the negative principle, to the serpent, or to Lucifer: it must therefore be inferred that it is the division brought about by the first Son of the Father, the rebel angel, that gives life to the Father himself. We return in this way to the vital (i.e. generative) function of life, of the opposition exercised by the negative element. This aspect is expressed in even clearer terms in the Griesheim manuscript of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, which gives an alternative formulation to the passage cited above: “thus the Separator first gives birth to the living God”.²⁵³ The relationship between God and the separating Son is indeed turned upside down – it is the *Separator* that allows the generation of the living God! – so as to indicate that divine vitality is son of devilish differentiation.

In the lectures edited by Michelet there is also an expression worthy of note: the generation of the Son in Böhman thought is described as the “most vital dialectic”.²⁵⁴ Hegel distinguishes Böhme’s God from the pseudo-mystic Absolute of the Romantics and the Schelling group precisely on the basis of this way of understanding the vitality of the Divine, fruit of the presence of Evil in God, of the negative in the positive. The 1825–1826 course in *History of Philosophy* contains a crucial passage in this respect: “We see that Böhme is infinitely elevated above the empty abstraction of the infinite, eternal, highest essence etc.”²⁵⁵ This statement seeks to

²⁵⁰ I quote from *Werke* 15, 306 but see the same passage in V 9, 82: “Das Princip des Begriffs ist in Böhm durchaus lebendig.”

²⁵¹ V 9, 85: “In Gott dem Vater geht der Blitz, der Separator auf und aus diesem Separator wird erst der lebendige Gott geboren.” Cf. *History of Phil.*, 102.

²⁵² The concept of God as *Father* in Böhme’s philosophy is more complex than might appear from Hegel’s lectures, in which the emphasis is placed on the inner division of the Divine rather than on the characteristics of the God that precedes the division and which – as Böhme explains for example in *Von der Gnadenwahl* – cannot be defined either as God or as Father, insofar as he hasn’t yet generated any Son. In this respect see Muratori (2006).

²⁵³ V 9, 85 in note: “Der Separator gebärt erst so den lebendigen Gott.”

²⁵⁴ I quote from *Werke* 15, 317 (cf. TWA 20, 118): “Dieß sind nun die Hauptgedanken des Böhm. Böhme’s tiefe Gedanken sind: α) das Erzeugtwerden des Lichts, Sohns Gottes aus den Qualitäten, – lebendigste Dialektik; β) die Direktion seiner selbst.”

²⁵⁵ V 9, 84 (cf. *Werke* 15, 313): “Wir sehen, Böhme ist unendlich erhaben über das leere Abstraktum vom Unendlichen, Ewigen, höchsten Wesen usw.” Cf. *History of Phil.*, 100.

clarify once and for all the difference between the vital God of Böhme (vital because nourished internally by a conflict with the negative principle) and a certain concept of Absolute particularly in vogue in the early 1800s, which Hegel judges immobile and lifeless. There is also a moment of *abstraction* in Böhme's thought – it will be remembered how Hegel translated the expression “dark valley” with the word *Abstraktum*. Nevertheless, from Hegel's point of view, the abstraction of the Father in Böhme is neither empty nor static, but contains within it the seed of the difference that will bring about the *Ur-teilung*, the source of vitality and origin of Being-Other in its most problematic form, as a spark that separates Evil.²⁵⁶ The function given to Evil as a driving force within God therefore distinguishes the speculative mysticism of Böhme from pseudo-mysticism in its various forms.²⁵⁷

Jakob Böhme expressed the dynamics of the birth of Evil through his representation of the generation and fall of Lucifer: this, according to Hegel, is the most profound point of the shoemaker's thinking. Drawing on the discussion on Lucifer as *Separator* and as *Ichts*, i.e. origin of consciousness, Hegel adds further details: “This egoity is the Separator, the one who initiates the action, the one who separates. He also calls this egoity Lucifer, the inborn Son of God and the one who is in charge of nature. But this Lucifer fell and this is the origin of evil in and from God. This, then, is the highest depth of Jakob Böhme.”²⁵⁸

The fall of Lucifer signals the moment of collision between opposites, through which Evil is thrust right inside its opposite – the Devil inside God and Christ inside the Devil. In its attempt to conceive the origin of Evil “in God and from God”, making the furthest opposites cling to each other in a tremendous struggle, Böhme's philosophy reveals itself in all its speculative depth.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ In this respect see the following comments by Sichirollo on the meaning of the term *dialectic*: “We see first of all the structure of the verb *διαλέγειν, διαλέγεσθαι*. In the preverb (which, considered separately, is equivalent to the Latin *dis-* in composites such as *discerpo, discerno, disiungo* etc.) there is the idea of separation, of division into two, of distribution, of difference and also of completion” (Sichirollo (1973), 14). The idea of division-into-two therefore forms the basis of the dialectic movement.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 134r, where it is emphasized that the God of Böhme contains within himself the *qualities* (where *quality* is the movement derived from the clash between *Qual* and *Quelle*): “Dieß Verborgene enthält aber alle Qualitäten.”

²⁵⁸ V 9, 84–85: “Dies Ichts nun ist der Separator, das Betätigende, Unterscheidende. Dies Ichts I nennt er auch Luzifer, den eingeborenen Sohn Gottes und den Amtmann der Natur. Aber dieser Luzifer ist abgefallen, und dies ist der Ursprung des Bösen in Gott und aus Gott selbst. So ist dies die höchste Tiefe des Jakob Böhme.” Cf. *History of Phil.*, 100. See also *Werke* 15, 316–317 (cf. TWA 20, 109): “Das ist der Zusammenhang des Teufels mit Gott; das ist Andersseyn, und dann Fürsichseyn, Für-Eines-Seyn, daß das Andere für Eines sey. Und dieß ist der Ursprung des Bösen in Gott und aus Gott. So ist dieß die höchste Tiefe der Gedanken des Jakob Böhme. – Dieser Lucifer ist abgefallen. Denn das Ichts – das Selbstwissen, *Ichheit* (ein Wort, das bei ihm vorkommt) – ist das Sichinsichhineinbilden, das Sichinsichhineinimaginieren, das Fürsichseyn, das Feuer, das alles in sich hineinzehrt. Dieß ist das Negative im Separator, die Qual, oder es ist der *Zorn* Gottes; dieser Zorn ist die Hölle und der Teufel, der durch sich selbst sich in sich hinein imaginirt. Das ist sehr kühn und spekulativ; so sucht Böhme aus Gott selbst den Zorn Gottes zu fassen.”

²⁵⁹ Cf. also *Werke* 15, 319 (cf. TWA 20, 111): “[Böhme faßt] das Andere Gottes in Gott selbst.”

Not only does the kernel of Böhme's speculation consist of this interpretation of the conflict between opposites, but Hegel regards Böhme's mysticism altogether as a form of conflict: "Grasping the negative in the Idea of God as well, conceiving God as absolute identity: this is the struggle that he has to undergo".²⁶⁰ On the one hand, Böhme is different from the philosophies that establish absolute divine identity because he places at the centre of his reflection the relationship between opposites; on the other hand, the harsh conflict between opposites prevents him from imagining unity. On the contrary, Böhman unity is seen as the place in which the opposites are generated and mirror each other in a relationship of conflict and of necessary dependence. The mysticism of Jakob Böhme is therefore characterized by this two-fold attempt: to think the difference without abandoning the idea of unity. According to Hegel, the connection between these opposite tendencies define Jakob Böhme's task as a mystic, and where he sought to arrive with his speculation.²⁶¹

The significance the concept of *speculation* assumes in this context can be further clarified by a reference in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1827, where there is a definition of what is *not* speculative: "The non-speculative, the intellectual thought is the one in which there is a standstill by the distinction as such, e.g. by the opposite of finite and infinite."²⁶² If the difference is posited and maintained in this way, generating an opposition whose terms share nothing with each other except their being absolutely distinct, then there is no true speculation. It follows from it that speculation consists of an active relationship between opposites, considered as interdependent terms: it is therefore the manner of the relationship, or rather of the conflict, between God and Devil that characterizes Böhme's philosophy as a philosophy with a speculative content.²⁶³ At the center of Böhman speculation, therefore, is God and his opposite, whose connection resembles that of an object with its reflection on the surface of a mirror.²⁶⁴ In Böhme's God – comments the Hotho manuscript (1823–1824) – "the opposites are separate, yet it is not a split entity",²⁶⁵ creating a speculative balance between the necessary separation and the equally necessary unification.

²⁶⁰ V 9, 80 (differently in *Werke* 15, 304): "In der Idee Gottes auch das Negative aufzufassen, Gott als absolute Identität zu begreifen – dies ist | der Kampf, den er [Böhme] zu bestehen hat". Cf. *History of Phil.*, 96.

²⁶¹ Cf. also *ibid.*, 87. It should also be pointed out that from 1825 the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* contain references to and quotations from *Quaestiones theosophicae, oder Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung*, in which Böhme describes the relationship between opposites as a clash between *Yes* and *No*, "Ja und Nein" (see also Böhme (1996)).

²⁶² V 5, 205: "Das nicht spekulative, das verständige Denken ist das, wo beim Unterschied als Unterschied stehengeblieben wird, z. B. beim Gegensatz des Endlichen und Unendlichen".

²⁶³ In this respect see Brunkhorst-Hasenclever (1976), 259.

²⁶⁴ In this sense *speculieren* is synonymous with *spiegelieren*: cf. DW, sub voce *spiegelieren*, which also refers to the meaning of the verb in DPGW.

²⁶⁵ Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v: "Die Gegensätze sind getrennt[,] und doch ist kein abtrünniges Wesen."

In a passage quoted from *On Divine Contemplation* – a passage that doesn't appear until 1825, indicating in all probability how Hegel's reading was evolving²⁶⁶ – Hegel identifies the traces of a movement that is actually dialectic in Böhme's approach to the problem of the co-existence of opposites: "Nothing can be revealed to itself without contrariety, since if it doesn't have anything which opposes it, then it always goes out and does not come back again to itself, and hence knows nothing of its origin".²⁶⁷ Hegel emphasizes the fact that according to Böhme the separation in *temperamentum* (or in the initial neutrality) had inevitably to take place. The quote from Böhme was carefully chosen by Hegel to describe this critical point, namely the need for opposition not only in God but in every living thing. Böhme uses the word *Widerwärtigkeit*, contrariety, to express the conflict that must be produced inside all things: without this conflict there can be no revelation, in the sense of self-consciousness. Furthermore, without this opposition – explains Böhme – the thing goes out of itself but can no longer return there, so that it is deprived of all *knowledge* of its own *Urstand*, i.e. of its own original condition (or *substance*, as Hegel translates it). We return in this way to the concept of Evil developed by Hegel through the commentary on *Genesis*: separation is the origin of knowledge (of itself and of the Other) and contains in itself also the possibility of reconciliation, or – as Böhme says – of *returning within itself*. We note therefore that Hegel has selected an example in which Böhme expresses, in his own barbarous language, the fundamental structure of the relationship between opposites that lead to the emergence of consciousness and the attainment of knowledge.

Hegel's interest in the conception of the Trinity must be considered in this context. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* he highlights the ubiquity, or the *general* nature, of Böhme's Trinity, which is regarded as the fundamental structure for movement, in God and in all creation. Each thing moves in a triadic motion mirroring the "life cycle" of God: from abstraction that characterizes the Father comes the transition to separation through the two-sided figure of the Son, Lucifer and Christ together; the opposition created by the *Separator* finally enables the *return within itself* and the possession of knowledge. This type of Trinity, for which the second Person represents the problematic, speculative heart, is therefore the scheme on which Böhme bases the possibility of divine revelation and the existence of life. "If one of the three is missing" – reads a passage from *Aurora* quoted in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* – "nothing can exist".²⁶⁸ "He therefore considers

²⁶⁶ The quotation is also present in the Jaeschke and Garniron edition of the 1825–1826 course and in the Dove manuscript (1825), but not in the Hotho manuscript (1823–1824). This could mean that Hegel further studied the writings of Böhme in the intervening years between the two courses, concentrating more and more attention on the problem of the dialectic of opposites and the origin of evil in the shoemaker's thought.

²⁶⁷ BS, vol. 4: *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, ch. 1, 8 (quoted in V 9, 83 and in *Werke* 15, 313): "Kein Ding ohne Widerwärtigkeit mag ihm selber offenbar werden: Dann so es nichts hat, das ihm widersteht, so gehets immerdar vor sich aus, und geht nicht wieder in sich ein [...] so weiß es nichts von seinem Urstand."

²⁶⁸ I quote from *Werke* 15, 324 (but see the same passage in V 9, 82): "so nun unter den Dreien eins fehlt, so kann kein Ding bestehen."

everything as this Trinity”,²⁶⁹ comments Hegel. And he adds: “his main, indeed one can say his only thought, is to grasp the divine Trinity in everything, so that it is the universal principle in which and through which everything is, and in such a way that all things have in themselves only this Trinity, not as a Trinity of the representation, rather as real.”²⁷⁰ The Trinity is Jakob Böhme’s only concern, according to Hegel, because all elements that he has traced in his interpretation of the shoemaker’s speculative mysticism lead back to it – the problem of the origin of Evil and more generally the need for opposition within all things, since only the continual encounter with difference can guarantee the movement of life as well as the movement of knowledge, of thought. To describe in other words the content of Böhman mysticism from Hegel’s point of view, we might recall a passage from *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, which reads: “the *origin of evil* in general lies in the mystery [*Mysterium*], that is in the speculative side of freedom”.²⁷¹ Hegel in fact identifies the speculative nucleus of Böhme’s philosophy in the conception of the origin of Evil, which represents the *Mysterium*, or the “speculative aspect of freedom”. The *Mysterium* – as we saw earlier – is not a secret, but a truth that has to be revealed: his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* showed that the origin of Evil is inextricably linked to the process of Divine revelation, as well as to the process of attaining knowledge. Hegel also emphasizes that the generation of Lucifer and his opposition to God must be interpreted as an assertion of freedom, which is established as a reaction to an Other. In this sense the philosophy of Böhme is a revelation of this speculative truth: the *Mysterium* of the origin and the necessity of Evil. Finally, since the *Mysterium* is none other than “that which is rational”²⁷² – where *rational* is synonymous with *speculative* and *conceptual* – we reach at this point the foundation on which Hegel’s reading of Böhme’s writings is based: Hegel identifies in Böhme’s thought the attempt to reveal the most profound mystery, a mystery of a speculative nature, relating to the structure of conceptual movement.

To what extent this attempt was crowned with success has already been partly considered through the analysis of Hegel’s criticism of Böhme’s language – a criticism structured as we have seen in bi-polar fashion (*on the one hand* Böhme uses barbarous and primitive imagery, *on the other* the imagery expresses a substantial

²⁶⁹ I quote from *Werke* 15, 324 (but see the same passage in V 9, 82): “Er [*Böhme*] betrachtet also Alles als diese Dreienigkeit.”

²⁷⁰ I quote from *Werke* 15, 304–305 (but cf. V 9, 80–81): “Sein Haupt-, ja man kann sagen, sein einziger Gedanke, [...] ist [...] in Allem die göttliche Dreienigkeit aufzufassen [...] so daß sie das allgemeine Princip ist, in welchem und durch welches Alles ist: und zwar so, daß alle Dinge nur diese Dreienigkeit in sich haben, nicht als eine Dreienigkeit der Vorstellung, sondern als reale”.

²⁷¹ TWA 7, 261: “Der *Ursprung des Bösen* überhaupt liegt in dem *Mysterium*, d. i. in dem *Spekulativen der Freiheit*”. My translation but cf. Hegel (2008), 135. On this *Anmerkung* at paragraph 139 see also Menegoni (2004), 230.

²⁷² V 5, 205: “Sie [*die spekulative Idee*] ist ein *μυστήριον* sowohl für die sinnliche Betrachtungsweise wie für den Verstand. *Μυστήριον* nämlich ist das, was das Vernünftige ist; bei den Neuplatonikern heißt dieser Ausdruck auch schon nur spekulative Philosophie.” Cf. *Philosophy of Religion*, III, 280.

philosophical content). Böhme didn't therefore manage to communicate the *Mysterium* in language appropriate to the concept. In his reading of *Theosophia Revelata* Hegel therefore seeks to *translate* certain barbarous words of Böhme into a rigorous language, demonstrating that it is possible to return to Böhme's writings in order to express the intuition that the author had failed to communicate with conceptual clarity. As a reader of Böhme, Hegel not only selects specific aspects of *Theosophia Revelata* but also suggests an approach that is worthy of careful consideration: for Hegel, *translating* the terminology of Böhme means completing what had been left unfinished in Böhme's writings and – *through the reading of Böhme* – moving closer to possession of the *Mysterium* through conceptual clarity. We will devote the concluding discussion to the possibility of rediscovering the speculative nucleus of Böhme's thought and freeing it from the barbarities of the form in which the shoemaker had expressed it in his writings.

Conclusion, or How to Liberate Böhme's Philosophy

In the manuscript of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* compiled by Hotho (1823–1824), there is a marginal note with an extract from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as translated by A. W. Schlegel.¹ This quote acts both as the conclusion and explanation of the argument present in the body of the text: "As a comparison one should mention a passage from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: Jacob Böhme is the spirit which is imprisoned in a gnarled and rigid oak, just like Prospero wants to imprison Ariel".² Jakob Böhme is compared to Ariel, the spirit imprisoned in the hollow of an oak by the witch Sycorax, and liberated by Prospero, Duke of Milan and an expert in magic. The latter breaks the curse but makes Ariel his servant under threat of returning him to the hollow of the tree. Why does Hegel choose to make this comparison? In what sense is Böhme, like Ariel, imprisoned within a "gnarled and rigid oak"? The same passage, in the version compiled by Michelet, provides us with a number of important clues:

Like Prospero in Shakespeare – in *The Tempest* (I, 2) – threatens to split a gnarled oak and shut Ariel in it for a thousand years, so Böhme's powerful spirit is imprisoned in the rigid, gnarled oak of the sensory, in gnarled, rigid concretions of representation. He cannot come to the free presentation of the Idea. To grasp the negative also in the idea of God, to conceive him as absolute – this is the fight, which looks so fearsome because he is so behind in the construction of thought.³

¹Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v (margin note): "Ariel: Ich dank' dir Herr. Prospero: Wenn du mehr noch murrest, So will ich einen Eichbaum spalten und dich in sein knorriges Eingeweide keilen bis zu zwölf Winter durch geheult". This reference to *The Tempest* is absent from V 9 and from the Dove manuscript of 1825. The edition cited in Hotho (1823–1824) is Shakespeare (1844).

²Hotho (1823–1824), fol. 133v: "Zur Vergleichung ist eine Stelle aus dem Scheakspear [sic] im Sturm zu nennen: Jacob Böhm ist der Geist, der in 1 [=eine] knorrig, starre Eiche gespannt, wie Prospero den Ariel einsperren will".

³*Werke* 15, 304 (cf. TWA 20, 98): "Wie Prospero bei Shakspeare – im *Sturm* – Ariel droht, eine wurzelknorrige Eiche zu spalten und ihn 1000 Jahre darin einzuklemmen: so ist Böhme's großer Geist in harte knorrige Eiche des Sinnlichen, – in knorrige, harte Verwachsung der Vorstellung eingesperrt. Er kann nicht zur freien Darstellung der Idee kommen. In der Idee Gottes auch das

The oak points metaphorically to Böhme's modes of expression, his use of imagery and the representations he adopts to express concepts. Imprisoned, so to speak, in an inadequate form, Böhme attempts to communicate the content of his philosophy while failing to free himself from this form and reach the "free presentation of the Idea". In his efforts to communicate the speculative nucleus of his thought in absolute terms (that is to say, the conception of God's inner negativity), Böhme finds himself caught in a battle with language as he seeks to apply concepts to terms that refer to sensory objects. This is a fearsome (*fürchterlich*) battle, insofar as Böhme does not master the art of *Gedankenbildung*, that is of developing and expounding thoughts in a language suited to philosophy. As a result, the "most speculative thought", though a key component present at the core of his mystical struggle, is condemned to remain at least in part unsaid, notwithstanding the violence with which Böhme's formidable spirit ("Böhmes grösser Geist") seeks an exit from the inflexibility of the oak, that is, from the rigidity of form. According to Hegel, the outcome of this battle is as follows: "He does not remain with *one* form, but rather throws himself into many forms, because neither the sensible nor the religious one can suffice".⁴ As a result of this battle to find a suitable means to express the speculative concept, Böhme is continuously led to abandon the expressive forms he adopts. In fact, according to Hegel, Böhme does not come to rest with any single form, but *throws* himself into many forms, in an unending linguistic experimentation. The constant movement to which this expressive search gives rise is central to Hegel's interpretation. Indeed, Hegel states that neither the language of earthly things, nor the metaphorical language of religion can placate the communicative tension of the mystic. Böhme *uses* the sensory language of alchemy in the same way as he *uses* religious terminology, but does not stop at one or the other, seeking rather to overcome the limits of both in a quest to find a new philosophical language. For Hegel, this violent approach to language is the beginning of German philosophy. Yet Böhme remains caught in the vortex of images he himself has created and fails to create a clear conceptual terminology. Returning to Hegel's Shakespearian comparison, one might say that the figure of Prospero is in fact necessary for the liberation of the speculative foundations of Böhme's philosophy from the barbarous (at once inadequate and courageous) form in which it is codified by the author.

As this book has sought to demonstrate, Hegel, as interpreter of Böhme, takes on precisely this task. Indeed, Hegel's reading of Böhme's *Theosophia Revelata* can be seen as an attempt to extract and expose the speculative kernel of the latter's work by developing its most important concepts in a more comprehensible terminology: this is precisely Hegel's contribution to the rediscovery of Böhme's thought in the nineteenth century, a contribution as important as it is innovative, particularly when considered in the context of the numerous alternative readings proposed by his contemporaries. By means of careful selection from Böhme's lengthy works, and

Negative zu fassen, ihn als absolut zu begreifen, – dieß ist der Kampf, der so fürchterlich aussieht, weil er in der Gedankenbildung noch so weit zurück ist."

⁴Ibid., 303 (cf. TWA 20, 97): "Er bleibt auch nicht bei Einer Form, sondern wirft sich in mehrere Formen herum, weil weder die sinnliche noch die religiöse genügen kann."

through detailed analysis and philosophical 'translation' (in the sense that I have explained), Hegel proposes a way to actuate what we could call the 'liberation' of Böhme's philosophy – a project as relevant and necessary today as it was at the time of Hegel's Berlin lectures on the *History of Philosophy*. That so few scholars have until now engaged with his interpretation of Jakob Böhme's philosophy, shows that Hegel may not have appeared at first sight to be the ideal candidate for such an undertaking – that is to say to liberate the mystic from the layers of barbarousness that so often leave him unread. This book has shown that these convictions are founded on a series of prejudices, first and foremost with respect to Hegel's relationship to mysticism. Hegel's commentary on Böhme's mysticism must, therefore, be inserted both into the historical context of the reception of Böhme, and into the development of different conceptions of mysticism in Hegel's writings. The grounds of Hegel's attitude to Böhme's speculative barbarism emerge at the very intersection of these two inquiries, leading to the following proposition: Hegel, recognizing both the limits and the potential of Böhme's philosophy, presents himself as the Prospero who liberates Böhme's most speculative thought from the heart of the oak, leaving behind what he considers the deadweights of this first 'Teutonic philosophy', its alchemic inheritance, barbarous linguistic formulations, and one single concept, the *Ungrund*. Whether Hegel's interpretation is acceptable and sufficiently respectful of its sources is beyond the scope of the present book. The task of this study has been only to explore Hegel's interpretation as a coherent possibility and a philosophically relevant path toward the rediscovery of the speculative depth of the first German philosopher whose thought is still too often caught in an oak tree of prejudices that Hegel sought – in my view successfully – to tear open.

Appendix: H.G. Hotho, *Nachschrift aus Hegels Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (Winter Term 1823–1824), fol. 129v–fol. 136r

[fol. 129v] Das Moment der Subjectivität erhält absolute Wichtigkeit. – Nach der allgemeinen Bestimmung des Grundcharakters kann erstens auf den Inhalt, der diese Zeit beschäftigt, aufmerksam gemacht werden.¹ Zu diesem Inhalt gehört die Erkenntniß des Daseins Gottes als aus dem Denken deduciret. Wir haben: Gott und Sein, Gott als reinen Geist und sein Sein. Beides soll durch das Denken gefaßt werden. Andere Interessen beziehen sich auf dieselbe allgemeine Bestimmung. Nämlich darauf, die Einheit des Gegensatzes zu erkennen, die an und für sich seiende Versöhnung auch in den gegenständlichen Interessen des Wissens hervorzu-bringen. In der christlichen Religion ist der härteste Gegensatz in 1 [=eine] Einheit gebunden, gefaßt.² Diese Einheit soll das Wahre sein. Wenn diese Einheit einmal als Einheit Gottes und des Seins ist, so ist der weitere Gegensatz: das Gute und Böse. Der Ursprung des Bösen soll erkannt werden. Das Böse nämlich ist das schlechthin andere Gottes, und doch ist Gott die absolute Macht. Das Böse widerspricht schlechthin der Heiligkeit Gottes, das Sein [fol. 130r] des Bösen seiner Macht. Der Gegensatz soll versöhnt werden. Eine dritte Form des Gegensatzes ist der: der Freiheit des Menschen. Das Individuum hat den absoluten Anfang des Bestimmens in sich, im Selbst, in der Spitze der Individualität, ein Entscheiden, das nicht aus Anderem sich determiniert.³ Dieses Entscheiden ist im Widerspruch damit, daß Gott das absolut Bestimmende ist. In Betreff des weltlichen Verlaufs wird dieß Bestimmende als die Praescienz Gottes gefaßt. Was Gott weiß ist wahr, denn sein Wissen ist kein bloß subjectives, sondern schlechthin seiend. Die Freiheit des Menschen erscheint nun näher darauf in Gegensatz[,] daß Gott das absolut

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¹ Der nähere Inhalt dieses Absoluten ist die concrete Einheit von: Denken und Sein als durch das Denken selbst in ihrer absoluten, d. h. concreten Einheit gefaßt.

² Die weitere concretere Bedeutung des Gegensatzes ist die: des Guten und Bösen.

³ Ein fernerer Gegensatz ist: Die Freiheit Gottes des Menschen und der absoluten Nothwendigkeit.

determinirende ist. Damit hängt zusammen der Gegensatz der Freiheit des Menschen und der Naturnothwendigkeit, in der äußerlichen Natur und der innerlichen des Menschen als fühlend und vorstellend.⁴ Dieser Gegensatz hat auch die nähere Form des Gegensatzes von Seele und Leib. – Dieß sind die Materien[,] welche das Interesse der Wissenschaft beschäftigen. Sie sind ganz anderer Art als die frühere Philosophie.⁵ Der Unterschied ist eben der, daß jetzt ein Bewußtsein über den Gegensatz, welcher in der alten Philosophie noch des Bewußtseins ermangelte. Dieß Wissen der Trennung, vom Abfall[,] ist in seiner eigentlichen Religiösen Weise der Hauptpunkt der christlichen Idee, so wie die Versöhnung in der Religion geglaubt wird. Diese Versöhnung denkend zustande zu bringen ist das Interesse neuerer Philosophie. Denn die Versöhnung ist nur an sich vollbracht, indem das Deuten sich für würdig und fähig hält, diese Versöhnung zu producieren. Die philosophischen Systeme sind von jetzt nur Weisen der Vereinigung dieser Gegensätze, die sich absolut vereinigen müssen, und zwar concret, indem diese Concretion für das Wahre gilt. Dieß ist das Interesse.

Was die näheren Stufen betrifft, so sind es drei Hauptperioden, [fol. 130v] die wir zu betrachten haben.⁶

Zunächst wird uns diese Einheit angekündigt. Es sind dies Versuche. Baco von Verulam und Jakob Böhme stoßen uns hier auf.⁷

Das zweite dieses Fassens ist die Metaphysische Vereinigung, womit erst die eigentliche Philosophie dieser Zeit beginnt. Diese fängt mit De Cartes an. Es ist dieß der Standpunkt, daß der denkende Verstand versucht, wie die Vereinigung zu Stande zu bringen sei. Des Cartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibnitz haben wir zu betrachten. Bei ihnen haben wir:⁸

Zweitens den Untergang dieser Metaphysik zu betrachten. Das dritte ist dieses, daß die Vereinigung selbst, die vereinigt werden soll[,] zum Bewußtsein kommt und Gegenstand wird.⁹ Das, was früher versucht war, wird jetzt Gegenstand, das Prinzip selbst der Vereinigung wird Gegenstand der Betrachtung.¹⁰ Als Prinzip hat die Vereinigung diese Gestalt vom Verhältniß der Erkenntniß zum Gegenständlichen, die Reduktion der ganzen Metaphysik auf die Frage: wie das Erkennen sich zum

⁴ Ferner von Seele und Leib.

⁵ Der Fortschritt nun der alten Philosophie zur neuen ist der, daß im classischen Philosophieren diese Gegensätze noch in bewußtloser Einheit schlummerten, während die Aufgabe des Mittelalters war, diese Einheit zu zerreißen, so wie die neuere Welt sie wieder zu producieren hat.

⁶ Allgemeine Einleitung.

⁷ Erste Periode.

Von Des Cartes bis Leibnitz.

⁸ Zweite Periode.

Verstandes Metaphysik von Wolf.

Empirismus: Humesche Skeptizismus.

⁹ Dritte Periode.

Der subjektive Idealismus:

Kant und Fichte.

¹⁰ Der objektive: Schelling.

Gegenständlichen verhält?¹¹ Das Innere der Metaphysik ist für sich herausgehoben und zum Gegenstand gemacht.

Was das äußere Geschichtliche betrifft, so ist zu bemerken, daß das Geschichtliche der Philosophen selbst eine andere Gestalt erhält.¹² In der alten Zeit waren die Philosophen selbständige Individualitäten. Sie lebten, wie sie lehrten[,] das heißt, indem sie zum Gegenstand ihres Interesses das Universum machten, so ist der äußere Zusammenhang fern von ihnen geblieben, die Welt hat sie unter der Bestimmung ihrer Wahrheit interessiert, nicht die Verhältnisse des äußeren Lebens, von denen sie sich entfernt hielten. Sie ließen sich nicht in Dinge ein, die nicht Interesse[n] [fol. 131r] ihres Denkens waren. Sie hielten sich als Privatleute fast wie Mönche, welche dem Zeitlichen sich entschlagen.¹³ Verhältnißlos hielten sie sich zur Welt. In der neueren Zeit ist es anders. Wir sehen hier die Philosophie im Zusammenhange mit der Welt. Wir sehen sie mit anderen in Abhängigkeit von den Verhältnissen selber. Denn in der modernen Welt ist dieß herrschend: daß für das Individuum nothwendig ist, in den Zusammenhang der äußeren Existenz einzutreten, denn es giebt keine eigenthümliche Weise der Existenz. Es kann dieß verglichen werden mit der alten und neueren Tapferkeit. Die alte ist rein individuell, die neuere ist, daß Feder sich auf die Gemeinschaft, auf den Zusammenhang mit anderen verläßt und darin sein Verdienst hat. Im modernen Leben ist die Gemeinschaftlichkeit die Weise der Existenz überhaupt. Das Individuum kann nur in diesem Zusammenhange aushalten.

Wir haben also zuerst Baco und Jacob Böhm zu betrachten. Sie sind vollkommen disparat.

Was zunächst Baco betrifft, so ist er von einem früheren durch den Beinamen [sic] "von Verulam" zu unterscheiden. 1561 †1626.¹⁴ Sein Vater war Großsiegelbewahrer unter Elisabeth: Essex hat den jüngeren Baco besonders hervorgehoben; doch ließ sich dieser von den Feinden Essex's umstricken und klagte denselben des Hochverraths an. Baco selbst ward unter Jacob I Großkanzler des Reichs. Hier auf diesem Posten ließ er sich die größten Unredlichkeiten zu Schulden kommen und ward durch das Parlament zum Gefängniß verdammt. Doch die ihn stürzten, Buckingham etc. nahmen sich noch schlechter, was den Haß gegen Baco milderte. Aus dem Gefängniß ward er entlassen, aber ausgestrichen aus der Liste der Paires. Er lebte sodann als Privatmann der Wissenschaften.

[fol. 131v] Er steht an der Spitze des empirischen Wesens der Erkenntniß, und ist der Anführer dessen, was die Engländer noch jetzt Philosophie nennen. Baco erwarb sich allerdings große Verdienste durch die Art und Weise, die er bestimmt, mit

¹¹ Der absolute.

¹² Die alten Philosophen waren selbständige Individualitäten, und in sofern sie nur das Universum in seiner Wahrheit im Guten interessierte, das Prinzip des Gedankens aber sich nur in einem beschränkten Kreise des Wirklichen wiederfand, lebten sie fern von den äußeren Interessen des Lebens.

¹³ Indem aber in der neueren Zeit jedes Moment der Idee Wirklichkeit hat, so kann das Individuum nur Wahrheit haben als im steten Zusammenhange mit der Wirklichkeit und ihren Verhältnissen.

¹⁴ Bacon, Verulam 1561 †1626.

welcher man die Aufmerksamkeit auf äußere und innere Erscheinungen richten solle, um allgemeine Gesetze zu erhalten.¹⁵ Aber sein Name gilt mehr als der Mann seinem Wirken nach verdient. Die Tendenz der Zeit ward es und besonders des englischen Raisonnements auf Thatsachen zu setzen und diese aufzustellen. Und indem Baco diese Richtung aussprach[,] wird ihm es zugeschrieben, als habe er dem Erkennen die Richtung gegeben. Was seine Leistungen betrifft, so ist es, daß er versuchte[,] einen Entwurf zur systematischen Darstellung alles Wissenswürdigen aufzustellen.¹⁶ Die Ganze des Wissens sollte als ein Tableau dargestellt werden. Was aber die Prinzipien der Eintheilung betrifft, so theilt er die Wissenschaft ein: in Gedächtniß (Geschichte), Phantasie (Kunst) und Vernunft (Wissenschaft). Die Eintheilung ist im Ganzen unbefriedigend. Zur Geschichte rechnet er: Werke Gottes, des Menschen, der Natur. – Das zweite Ausgezeichnete ist, daß Baco suchte eine neue Methode des Erkennens geltend zu machen.¹⁷ Seine Hauptbestimmungen sind, daß er gegen die bisherige sillogistische Form des scholastischen Schließens polemisch verfuhr. Er nannte sie Anticipationen, indem man Begriffe voraussetzte[,] ohne auf das zu sehen, was die Erfahrung der Wirklichkeit zeige.¹⁸ Das Schließen verwirft er im Allgemeinen und fordert, daß von Beobachtungen ausgegangen werde und nach Indirectionen verfahren. Die Induction setzt er den Syllogismen entgegen. Aber die Induction ist selbst ein Schluß, denn aus der Menge der Beobachtungen soll ein Allgemeines heraus gebracht werden. Wenn Baco also das Schließen verwirft[,] hätte er auch die Induction verlassen müssen. Ein zweiter Mangel ist, daß er[,] wie alle Erfahrungsphilosophen meinen[,] sich an die bloßen Beobachtungen zu halten, während sie [fol. 132r] dennoch metaphysionieren, nicht beim Sinnlichen stehen bleiben, sondern das Einzelne in allgemeine Bestimmungen in Gedanken fassen.¹⁹ Die Erfahrung ist nicht bloß sinnliche Wahrnehmung[,] sondern hat die Thätigkeit des Denkens in sich. Die ausgebreitetste Gedankenbestimmung z.B. ist die Kraft etc. Kraft ist 1 [=ein] Gedanke. Denn sie ist nicht wahrgenommen. Der Fehler geht darin weiter, daß die Empiriker ganz bewußtlos sich den allgemeinen Gedanken = Formen hingeben ohne sie mitersucht zu haben, da sie meinen, von Gedanken fern zu sein. Baco giebt näher auch die Gegenstände an, mit denen die philosophische Betrachtung sich beschäftigen soll. Sie contrastieren sehr verglichen mit dem, was wir aus der Erfahrung schöpfen. Er dringt nemlich darauf: Die Verlängerung des Lebens, Retardation des Alters, Veränderung der Statur, die Verwandlung des Körpers, Erzeugung neuer Classen, Gewalt über den Naturprozess—zu betrachten, dieser Untersuchungen nicht zu ver-

¹⁵ Bacos Richtung ist die auf die unmittelbare Beobachtung der Natur, wodurch deren Gesetze sollten zum Vorschein gebraucht werden.

¹⁶ Ferner versuchte er alles wissenswerthe als System vorzustellen.

¹⁷ Die Methode der Beobachtung konnte er nur geltend machen, insofern er gegen alles Erkennen aus Schlüssen polemisierte.

¹⁸ Indem er aber dahin fortging, die Einzelheiten der Beobachtung in 1 [=ein] Allgemeine zusammenzufassen, so verfiel er selbst in das Schließen, was er von der Philosophie ausschloß.

¹⁹ So ist er wie alle Erfahrungsphilosophen der Widerspruch seiner selbst das Denken auszuschließen, und dennoch zu denken.

lassen.²⁰ Er giebt Recepte Gold zu machen etc. Er steht also nicht auf dieser rein verständigen Stufe, sondern liegt noch unter dem Druck des ärgsten Aberglaubens. In Ansehung des Formellen ist 1 [=ein] Hauptzug, daß er sagt: die Naturphysik bestehe aus zwei Theilen: aus der Betrachtung der Ursachen, und aus der Kenntniß der Hervorbringung der Wirkungen.²¹ Das Erste gehöre der Metaphysik, das 2te der Physik an. Unter den Ursachen unterscheidet er Endursachen und formelle. Ueber die Endursachen erklärt er, daß ihre Untersuchung kein Interesse habe. Z. B. daß Blitz und Donner Strafen Gottes seien. Es ist dieß 1 [=eine] nichtige Seite. Denn diese teleologische Betrachtung ist 1 [=eine] Beziehung der Gegenstände nach nur äußerlichen Seiten. Anders ist es[,] wenn man den einen treibenden Begriff der Dinge, ihren Selbstzweck verwirft. Gewöhnlich ist das teleologische äußerliche Zweckmäßigkeit. Vorzüglich dringt Baco auf die Untersuchungen der Formen der Dinge. [fol. 132v] Doch war er sich selbst darüber nicht klar. Es mögen die immanenten Bestimmtheiten der Gegenstände ihre Gesetze sein.²² Er sagt: "In der Natur existieren zwar nur die individuellen Körper, aber ihre Wirksamkeiten erscheinen nach 1 [=einem] Gesetz, und die Findung desselben ist die Hauptsache für das Erkennen und das Hervorbringen der Ursachen". Was er dann mit Erkenntniß der Formen gemeint hat, ist: "daß[,] wenn man die Formen verstehe, man im Besitz sei, diese Naturen zu superinducieren auf alle Gegenstände, zum Beispiel die Natur des Goldes in Silber einzuführen". Er sagt: "das Irrthum der Alchimisten bestehe nur darin zu meinen auf phantastische Weise die Vereinigungen der Naturen zu erhalten". Baco war in großen Lebensverhältnissen gewesen, hatte die ganze Verdorbenheit seines Zeitalters durchgemacht. Als Mann von Geist, von tiefblickender Verständigkeit hatte er doch nicht die Fähigkeit nach Begriffen zu denken.²³ Was man Weltkenntnis nennt[,] hat er im hohen Grade besessen, und in die Einsamkeit gekommen, hat er sein Beobachten niedergelegt. Er kennt die Menschen mehr als Sachen, die Deduction nach Begriffen fehlt; tiefe einzelne Blicke, Aussprüche, sind überall umhergestreut, doch ex cathedra als Bemerkungen, als Vorstellungen ausgesprochen, durch Beispiele und nicht durch Argumentation bewiesen. In Betreff auf Wissenschaft findet man keine bedeutenden Resultate. Von Bacon, dem Großkanzler von England, dem Heerführer des äußerlichen Philosophierens gehen wir zu dem Schuhmacher Jacob Böhme aus der Lausitz.²⁴ Er ist als 1 [=ein] wahrer Phantast, als pietistischer Schwärmer verschrien, in der Zeit

²⁰ Er theilt die Naturbetrachtung ein in:

1. Betrachtung der Ursachen und

2. Kenntnis der Hervorbringung der Wirkungen.

²¹ Ferner schließt er richtig die teleologische Betrachtung als äußerliche Zweckmäßigkeit aus, welche er die Betrachtung aus Endursachen nennt.

²² Dagegen dringt er auf die Untersuchung der Formen der Dinge, d.h. der Gesetze.

²³ Der Gegensatz gegen Baco als dem Naturbeobachter ist Jacob Böhme, welcher das selbst als die Quelle des Absoluten aufstellte, insofern das selbst selber das Wissen des Absoluten von sich sei.

²⁴ Jacob Böhme aus Alt-Seidenberg bei Görlitz 1575 †1624.

der Aufklärung ganz vergessen[.] Die neuere Zeit erst ward wieder aufmerksam gemacht, seine Tiefe anerkennend.²⁵

Was das Äußerliche seiner Geschichte betrifft[.] so ist er in Seidenburg 1575 [fol. 133r] bei Görlitz geboren. Als Kind hühete er als Bauernjunge das Vieh. Vor seinen Werken ist eine Lebensbeschreibung. Er erzählt, daß er auf den Weiden wunderbare Erfahrungen gehabt habe. Er habe eine Höhle voll des schönsten Goldes und Edelsteinen gefunden. Dann ward er bei einem Schuster in die Lehre gegeben. Dort beim lieblichen jovialischen Schein des Zinns sei zuerst sein astralischer Geist ins Centrum des Lichts entrückt. Auf der Wanderschaft habe er, um zur Wahrheit zu gelangen[.] immer gebetet, bis er durch den Zug des Sohnes zum Vater sei in die ruhige Sabbathstille des seligen Schauens erhoben. Sieben Tage habe er in himmlischer Beschaulichkeit gelebt. Als Meister sei er vor's Thor gezogen aller seiner Phantasien sich zu entschlagen. Hier habe er mehr und mehr den Blick ins Innere gethan, den Dingen in's Herz gesehen, wofür er Gott ruhig gedanket. In Görlitz trieb er sein Handwerk, und hat dabei mehrere Schriften geschrieben. 1624 starb er. Welche Schriften er gelesen habe, ist nicht bekannt. Ein Hauptbuch, das er las, war die Bibel.

Er selber nannte sich theosophus theutonicus[.] und wir können sagen[.] die Art und Weise seines Strebens sei ächt deutscher Art.²⁶ Was die nähere Weise seiner Darstellung betrifft so ist sie allerdings barbarisch, obgleich er im tiefsten Interesse der Idee steht, mit ihren Gegensätzen sich herum kämpft. Aber die speculative Wahrheit bedarf um sich selbst zu fassen wesentlich der Form des Gedankens. Denn nur in Gedanken ist diese Einheit, in deren Mittelpunkt Jacob Böhme steht, und gerade die Form des Gedankens fehlt ihm.²⁷ Die Formen, die er gebraucht sind keine Gedankenbestimmungen[.] sondern einerseits sinnlich: das Herbe, Bittere, Süße, die Liebe, den Zorn, den Mercurius und eine Menge solcher Weisen. Diese sinnlichen Formen behalten bei ihm nicht die eigenthümliche Bedeutung des Sinnlichen[.] sondern er gebraucht sie [fol. 133v] zum Ausdruck von Gedankenbestimmungen, wodurch die Darstellung gewaltsam erscheint, weil nur die Spitze des Gedankens diese Bestimmungen vermag auszudrücken.²⁸ Man muß daher die Idee näher kennen[.] um zu wissen[.] was er will. Das andere ist, daß er als Form der Idee die christliche Vorstellung gebraucht.²⁹ Und diese Dreifaltigkeit wendet er an und setzt es in Beziehung mit dem Herben und Bitteren. So er hat zum Ausdruck sinnlichen Formen und religiöser Vorstellungen. Deswegen stellt sich sein Gemälde als ein schmerzhafter Kampf dar.³⁰ Man hat das Gefühl des Ringens einer wilden rohen Austrennung[.] die das zusammenfassen will, was auseinander fällt. Aber durch die Stärke seines Geistes bricht er die Formen, denn zum

²⁵ Biographie Jacob Böhm's.

²⁶ Der Inhalt der Jacob Böhm'schen Philosophie ist die speculative Idee in ihrer inneren Tiefe.

²⁷ Aber die Form für diesen Inhalt ist nicht der Gedanke, sondern einerseits des Sinnliche.

²⁸ Dieses Sinnliche, indem es soll der Ausdruck für Gedankenbestimmungen sein, behält nicht seine eigentliche Bedeutung, sondern wird zum Symbol.

²⁹ Eine fernere Form ist die religiöse Vorstellung.

³⁰ Indem der Ausdr[u]ck mit dem Inhalt kämpft, entsteht 1 [=ein] steter Formenwechsel.

Hintergrunde hat er die tiefste Speculation die aber nicht zu angemessener Darstellung kommt.³¹ Man muß daher 1 [=eine] systematische Darstellung nicht erwarten, auch keine wahrhaften Bestimmungen für das Besondere. Auch wirft er sich in allen Formen umher, weil nur Gedanken als Form kann Genüge leisten. Eine derbe Weise der Darstellung kommt dann auch hervor; mit dem Teufel hat er viel zu thun.³² Zur Vergleichung ist eine Stelle aus dem Scheakspear im Sturm zu nennen: Jacob Böhm ist der Geist, der in 1 [=eine] knorrige, starre Eiche gespannt, wie Prospero den Ariel einsperren will.

Das Hauptstreben Jacob Böhms ist die absolute göttliche Einheit und die Vereinigung aller Gegensätze in Gott.³³ Gott ist die Totalität aller Gegensätze[,] aber als Einheit: Ein stetes Contrarium ist unter den Gegensätzen, und dennoch ist nur eine Einheit.³⁴ Die Gegensätze sind unterschieden durch die Qual und die Pein. Quellen, Qual, Qualität ist ihm dasselbe. Die Qual ist die sich auf sich beziehende Negativität, die sich auf sich beziehend absolute Affirmation ist. Jacob Böhms Einheit ist also solche, sie Unterschiedenes eint.³⁵ Die Gegensätze sind getrennt und doch ist kein abtrünniges Wesen. [fol. 134r] Eins ist im Andern als Nichts als aufgehobenes, aber nach dessen Eigenschaft es darin ist, ist es nicht offenbar. Der härteste Ausdruck ist dafür: den Teufel aus Gott zu begreifen. – Dieser der Grundgedanke nun also bei Jacob Böhme ist die heilige Dreifaltigkeit, als welche er alles begreifen will; Alles ist diese Dreiheit und diese Dreiheit ist alles. Die Darstellung darüber ist bald lichter bald trüber.

Zuerst beginnt Böhme von Gott als der einfachen Essenz als dem Verborgenen, worin alles temperiert ist.³⁶ Dieß ist der göttliche Pomp.³⁷ Er ist der Große Salliter, Salpeter (das Neutrale.) Dieß Verborgene enthält aber alle Qualitäten. Dieß Eine nennt Böhme auch den Leib Gottes, der alle Qualitäten in sich faßt. Er sagt: betrachten wir das Curriculum der Sterne[,] so sehen wir[,] es sei die Mutter aller Dinge.³⁸ So sagt man in neueren Zeiten: Gott sei die Einheit aller Realitäten. Die gesammten Sterne und die Erde etc. sind der Corpus Gottes, die Sterne die Quelladern. Er ist in diesem Leib nicht als der Dreifaltige in seiner Glorie[,] aber er ist darin. Diese allgemeine Existenz als eine Einheit gefaßt ist der Vater, die creatürlich als die Sterne existiert. In Gott Vater sind die Kräfte in Einem. Betrachtet man die ganze Natur[,] so sieht man den Vater, so viel Sterne am Himmel stehen, so

³¹ Deshalb ist die Darstellung weder systematisch noch im Besonderen genügend.

³² Ariel: Ich dank' dir Herr.

Prospero: Wenn du mehr noch murrest, So will ich einen Eichbaum spalten und dich in sein knorriges Eingeweide keilen bis zu zwölf Winter durch geheult.

³³ Darstellung der Jacob Böhme'schen Philosophie.

³⁴ Das absolute Prinzip ist die speculative Idee als absolute Einheit des absolute Entgegengesetzten, so wie als absolute Entgegensetzung des absolut Einen und die Einheit dieser Entgegensetzung und Einheit.

³⁵ Das Prinzip der Entgegensetzung ist die Qual als das sich selbst Negative.

³⁶ 1: Die göttliche Dreifaltigkeit.

³⁷ a. Gott der Vater: der große Salliter.

³⁸ Er ist die unenthüllte Einheit der Totalität aller Bestimmungen.

groß ist Gottes Kraft. Aber nicht jede Kraft im Vater ist nicht in 1 [=einem] besonderen Theil wie die Sterne am Himmel[,] sondern alle Kräfte sind in ihm als Eine. Diese eine Kraft als creatürlich ist die Natur überhaupt. Diese verschiedenen Qualitäten sucht B. auch zu bestimmen.³⁹ Doch ist diese Auseinanderlegung sehr trübe. Die Qualität ist ihm die Beweglichkeit, das Treibende der Dinge, die Hitze[,] deren Species das Licht und die Grimmigkeit ist. Das Licht ist die Milde. Das Herz die Quelligkeit. [fol. 134v] Die Grimmigkeit ist das Verzehren, die Negativität, das Verderbende, das Beengende. In Gott ist das Licht ohne Hitze.

Gott ist der Quellbrunn der Natur, die Unterschiede der Qualitäten von Gott ist ungenügend.

Der Vater nun ist die Totalität der Kräfte, die im großen Salliter Gottes arbeiten.⁴⁰ Es sind 7 Geister, die in Gott triumphieren wie ein Geist. Es steht nicht ein Geist nebeneinander wie die Sterne am Himmel; jeder der Geister ist aller Geister schwanger; alle sind wie ein Geist, einer gebärt den andern.⁴¹

Das zweite ist der Sohn; der Sohn ist das Herz, der Kern in allen Kräften, das Belebende; das feste ist der Salliter; der Sohn ist das Treibende, Quellende; er quillt in allen Kräften des Vaters.⁴² Der Sohn wird in allen Kräften immer geboren und ist der Glanz[,] der im Vater leuchtet. Ohne ihn wäre der Vater 1 [=ein] finster Thal, denn seine Kraft stünde nicht auf. Der Sohn also ist überhaupt das Bestimmende. Der Anfang aller Wesen ist das Wort, und Gott ist das Eine. Das Wort der ewige Anfang, denn es ist die Offenbarung des Einen, wodurch die göttliche Kraft zur Wissenschaft wird. Das Wort ist der Ausfluß des göttlichen Einen und ist durch Gott. Dieß Ausgeflossene ist die Weisheit aller Kräfte, aller Tugenden Ursach, der ewige Wille beschaut sich in diesem Einen und daraus springt das Schauen des ewigen im Ichts (Gegensatz von Nichts). Weiter daher wird dieß Ichts das Selbstbewußtsein; indem das Herz des Sohns die Contraction zum Effect des Für-sich-seins ist. Der Sohn ist der Separator im Ausfluß des Einen, die Schiedlichkeit des Ausflusses, der Amtmann, der alle Dinge ordnet.⁴³ Dieser Sohn ist der Lucifer, der aber abfiel. Der Lucifer, dieß In-sich-sein, die Offenbarung, das Wissen, [fol. 135r] das sich Anschauen, die Ichtheit ist der Teufel, der es sich in sich hinein imaginiert, die Qual, das Feuer, der Zorn Gottes, die Hölle und der Teufel. Das Fortgehen zum Ichts ist auch die Selbstheit. Dieser Separator ist es, welcher die unendliche Vielheit bestehen läßt, und das ewige Eine sich empfindlich macht. Der Ausfluß führt sich bis in die feurige Art, die Finsterniß. Diese ist die Selbstheit. In dieser feurigen Art wird das Licht, welches die Rückkehr ist zum Einen. Das Feuer ist der

³⁹ b. Das Princip der Unterschiedlichkeit ist die Qualität als Hitze, Grimmigkeit, Zorn, Herbigkeit, so wie als Licht, Milde, Stärke.

⁴⁰ α. Diese Unterschiede sind aber in Gotte Vater Eines, so daß jede Bestimmung Totalität, jede das Ganze und keine Unterschieden ist.

⁴¹ Durch das Prinzip aber der Qualität quillt aus dem Vater.

⁴² b. Der Sohn.

Er ist das Prinzip der Bestimmung in Gott, der Separator.

⁴³ β Als diese für sich sein, nur sich in sich zusammenziehende Bestimmung aber nun ist der Abfall von Gott, der Teufel.

Urstand des empfindenden Lebens. Das Peinen oder die Angst, die Qual macht erst alles Leben wirkend und wollend, und das Licht macht es freudenreich, indem es ist Salbung der Peinlichkeit. Die Hauptvorstellung nun also ist die absolute Einheit aller Kräfte. Zu diesem Einen aber ist das Andere, das Sich-in-sich-fassen, Für-sich-sein, Sich-verstehen. Der speculative Gedanke ist die Selbstunterscheidung des Einen in sich.⁴⁴ Näher kommt dabei die Form vor, daß dies Sich-vernehmen als 1 [=ein] Zusammenziehen in sich zu Einen Punkt vorgestellt wird, als Schärfe, Herbigkeit, Grimmigkeit, Zorn, der das Böse ist. Der Zorn aber ist der Zorn Gottes und dieß der Punkt, wo das Andere Gottes in Gott selber gefaßt wird. Aus dieser Herbigkeit, diesem Unterschieden ist es, daß von 1 [=einem] Corpus gesprochen wird.⁴⁵ Wenn nemlich der himmlische Korpus angezündet wird, so ist dieß der Zorn Gottes. Hier ist es auch der Blitz, der ausbricht; er ist die Mutter des Lichtes; das Gebährende des Lichtes. Der Blitz selber ist noch voll Grimmigkeit, das Licht das Freudige, Helle, das Verständige, der Blitz die göttliche Geburt des Lichtes. Eine Andere Form ist das Ja und Nein. In diesem sollen alle Dinge bestehen. Das Ja als das Eine ist Gott selber.⁴⁶ Es wäre unerkennlich ohne das Nein. Dieses ist der Gegenwurf gegen das Ja, auf daß die Wahrheit offenbar und etwas sei. Das Nein ist also das Prinzip alles Verstehens. [fol. 135v] Das Nein muß sein, damit die ewige Liebe etwas zu lieben habe.⁴⁷ Das Nein ist nicht neben dem Ja, sondern beide sind Ein Ding, doch scheiden sich in zwei Anfängen, quellen in sich. Ohne diese Zweiheit stünden alle Dinge still; flöße der ewige Wille nicht aus, er wäre keine Unterschiedlichkeit, denn die Urstände bestehen in der Unterschiedlichkeit. Der ausgeflossene Wille will die Ungleichheit, auf daß etwas sei, das das ewige Sehen sehe und empfinde, sonst wäre es nicht sehen. Der Ewige Wille ist das Nein;⁴⁸ das Ja ist unempfindlich, steht im Hauchen seiner selbst, fast wie Annehmlichkeit seiner durch das Nein. Und dieses heißt dadurch Nein, weil es hineinwärts geht in sich, sich abschließend. Der ausgeflossene Wille faßt sich in sich selbst hinein. Davon kommen Eigenschaften etc. Die Einheit faßt sich dadurch dann in sich zusammen aus diesem Nein.⁴⁹ Als Nein ist Gott zornig und eifrig.

Das dritte nun, der Geist, liegt schon im Vorigen.⁵⁰ Alle Sterne bedeuten die Kraft des Vaters; aus Ihnen ist die Sonne, sie machen sich ihre Einheit.⁵¹ Nun geht der Sonnen Kraft, Hitze und Sein auch in die Tiefe, setzt sich die Sterne, und in der

⁴⁴ Dieser Teufel ist die Schärfe, Herbigkeit, der Zorn, das Böse, aber als die Schärfe etc.[?] Gottes, so daß der Teufel aus Gott selbst begriffen ist und in Gottes Natur umgeändert.

⁴⁵ α. Aus ihm bricht nun aber der Blitz hervor, der das Licht gebiert: der Teufel ist das sich selbst vernichtende Negative und somit das schlechthin zum Positiven Umschlagende.

⁴⁶ Dieß Prinzip des Vaters und Sohnes ist auch als das Ja "und Nein" dargestellt.

⁴⁷ Das Ja ist des Joves, verfällt; das sich durch das Nein offenbart.

⁴⁸ Dieses in sich hinein sich ziehende ist das Prinzip aller Bestimmung.

⁴⁹ Das Ja aber in der Entgegensetzung mit dem Nein ist das ebenso mit ihm Geeinte.

⁵⁰ Dadurch ist Gott und der Sohn in ihrer unterschiedenen Einheit.

⁵¹ I Der Geist.

Er ist die Bewegung in sich selbst, des sich Bestimmens durch die Qualität und die Rückkehr zur ersten Einheit des Vaters.

Tiefe ist aller Sterne Kraft mit der Sonnen Licht ein Ding. Das Licht ist die Freude und Leiblichkeit der Peinlichkeit. Durch die Tiefe des Vaters ist alles; die vielerlei Kräfte des Vaters sind mit dem Lichte des Sohnes eines, ein alles bewirkende Geist, in dem alle Weisheit ist des Vaters und des Sohnes.⁵² Es ist der liebende Geist. Dies ist im Ganzen der Hauptgedanke.⁵³ Dabei ist die Vorstellung, daß Gottes Wesen der Ursprung ist der Welt durch das Moment des Unterschieds. Gottes Wesen ist also kein Fernes, sondern das Wesen der Creatur und Natur ist Gott selber. Du mußt nicht denken, es sei im Himmel ein Corpus, der Gott heiße, [fol. 136r] sondern du kannst keinen Ort nennen, wo die Geburt Gottes nicht sei, die Geburt der Dreifaltigkeit wird auch in deinem Herzen geboren.⁵⁴ Der Geist ist eben das Wollende[,] sich bewegende, sich Hervorbringende. Ueberall ist der Quellbrunn göttlicher Kraft. In allen Kräften sind Gottes Kräfte alle enthalten. Alle Dinge in der Welt ist nach dem Gottes Gleichniß gemacht; ich muß es Euch an allem Ding, an Gras an Stein, an Eurem Leben zeigen. Ihr Juden thut die Augen auf: ein Herz ist nach der Dreiheit Gottes gemacht, sein Leib und sein Inneres. Alles was in Meinem Herzen ist, alle Kraft ist der Vater. Daraus gebäret sich dein Licht, das dich alles Verstehen heißt; dieß ist der Sohn. Es scheint in dem ganzen Körper. Aus dem Licht geht alle Weisheit hervor. Diese Kraft und diese Erkenntniß ist in deinem Gemüt ein Ding, und dieß ist der Geist, der in dir herrscht, so du 1 [=ein] Kind des Lichtes. Derselbe ist ein Stein und Kraut, und ist keines wo nicht die Kraft ist, hernach der Saft und das Herz, ferner 1 [=eine] quellende Kraft, Geruch und Geschmack, der Geist.⁵⁵

Aus dieser Darstellung sehen wir allerdings, daß im besonderen die Willkühr herrschend wird. Aber aus diesen Expositionen ist nur das Allgemeine wieder zu erkennen, daß Gott in seiner Dreieinigkeit in der Natur sich wirklich mache.⁵⁶ Die Darstellung des Besonderen freilich ist trüber. Z. B. will er die Einheit der Dreiheit in den Dingen aufzeigen: so sagt er, sie bestehe aus dem groben Schwefel, dem Sal erstens und dann im Mercurius zunächst; der dritte Spiritus liegt im Schwefel, im Öhl; es ist die die Sänftigung des großen groben Schwefels. Das dritte ist die Tinktur, der höchste Grund, daraus die erste Schiedlichkeit jedes Dinges hervorgeht. Es ist die wesentliche Einheit jedes Dinges mit sich.⁵⁷ Geruch ist Empfindlichkeit dieser Tinctur. [fol. 136v] In der harten Weisen nun der Darstellung wird das speculativen Bedürfniß nicht zu verkennen sein.

Nach diesen 2 Extremen nun von Baco und Jacob Böhme, gehen wir zur 2ten Periode.

⁵² Daher ist der Geist das aus sich Quellende, das erst ist durch die Qual[,] die Pein seiner selbst.

⁵³ 2 Die Natur.

⁵⁴ Die Natur ist überall die Geburt der göttlichen Dreifaltigkeit.

⁵⁵ Das Aufzeigen dieser Dreifaltigkeit wird im Besonderen unklar.

⁵⁶ Das Prinzip aller Dinge ist:

Das Sal.

Der Mercurius als Princip der Schiedlichkeit.

Der Sulphur, das Öhl, die Tinktur.

⁵⁷ 3. Der Menschengestalt ist der sich selbst schauende göttliche Geist.

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Name Index

A

Adams, G.P., xix, 74
 Althaus, H., 219
 Ancilli, E., 162
 Ariel. *See* Shakespeare
 Aristotle, 160, 247
 Arnold, G., 4, 50, 79
 Asmuth, C., 194
 Asveld, P., 82, 94
 Augustine, 166
 Azzouni, S., 32

B

Baader, F. von, xvii, xviii, 7, 13, 17, 29, 35,
 41–56, 58, 73, 76, 80–81, 84, 85,
 138, 149, 150, 152–156, 185, 186,
 196–198, 214
 Bacchus, 165
 Bächtold-Stäubli, H., 5
 Bacon, F., 186, 188–191, 254, 295, 297
 Bal, K., 189, 191, 227, 239, 246
 Baldini, M., 162
 Bartuschat, W., 282
 Basler, O., 169
 Baudissin, W.H.F.K. von, 13
 Baum, M., 102, 108, 125, 140, 167, 194
 Baumgardt, D., 13, 17, 18, 19, 47, 49, 54,
 55, 84
 Behler, E., 19, 21, 23
 Beierwaltes, W., 174
 Beiser, F., 98
 Bengel, J.A., 53, 55, 75, 76, 77
 Benz, E., 2, 5, 31, 32, 49, 51, 75, 135

Beyerland, A.W. van, 6, 7
 Bianchi, M.L., 32, 47, 225
 Bodei, R., 128
 Bodenstein von Karlstadt, A.R. (known as
 Karlstadt), 11, 128
 Boethius, 166
 Böhme, J.
Aurora (Morgenröte im Aufgang), 4–6, 8,
 9, 12, 28, 208, 209, 211, 230, 231, 234,
 237, 238, 240, 251, 259–263, 271, 280,
 281, 286
Consideration of Divine Revelation
(Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung),
 260, 285
On Divine Contemplation (Von göttlicher
Beschaulichkeit), 258, 259, 261, 262,
 264, 265, 286
On the Election of Grace (Von der
Gnadenwahl), 195, 196, 283
Mysterium Magnum, 196, 235
The Way to Christ (Der Weg zu Christo),
 6, 235, 259
 Bonaventura. *See* Klingemann, A.
 Bonheim, G., 17
 Bonsiepen, W., 212, 234
 Bornkamm, H., 50
 Borruso, G., 81
 Bowman, B., 82, 83
 Bozzetti, M., 82, 83
 Brecht, M., 75–77, 91, 92
 Brentano, C., 1, 8, 42
 Brown, R.F., 54, 84, 196
 Brucker, J.J., 247
 Bruneder, G., 196, 197

Brunkhorst-Hasenclever, A., 285

Bruno, G., 80, 144, 181

Buddecke, W., xviii

Burath, H., 8, 18

Burger, G.M., 53

Bürke, G., 32, 41, 49, 51, 53

C

Calderón de la Barca, P., 18

Callisen, A.C.P., 41

Ceres, 165

Charles I (King), 7

Charlier de Gerson, J., 176, 177

Cicero, 256

Claudius, M., 42

Coleridge, S.T., 12, 26, 128, 129, 191, 196

Cooper, A.A., third Earl of Shaftesbury. *See*
Shaftesbury

Crescenzi, L., 9, 128

Croce, B., 221

Cuniberto, F., 3, 4, 20

Cusa, Nicholas of, 83, 166

D

Dahnke, H.-D., 1, 4

Dante Alighieri, 22, 27

De Negri, E., 195

Della Volpe, G., xix, 74, 78

Dellbrügger, G., 111

Derrida, J., 248

Descartes, R., 188, 191, 277

Desmond, W., 167

D'Hondt, J., 219

Di Giovanni, G., 100, 118, 233, 247

Dilthey, W., xix, 74, 82

Dove, H.W., xx, 244, 260–263, 286, 289

Dürer, A., 24

Düsing, K., 80, 91, 140

E

Eckhart (Meister), 38, 57, 73, 74, 78–81,
83–84, 93–95, 195, 214

Ederheimer, E., 11–13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25

Ego, A., 30

Ehrhardt, W.E., 196

Eichendorff, J. von, 15, 16, 18, 19

Ennemoser, J., 53

Enquist, P.O., 34, 38

Epicurus, 186

Erdmann, J.E., 135

Eschenmayer, C.A., 30, 41, 53, 135, 137–140

Eusebius of Caesarea, 80

F

Faber, G.F., 55

Fara, P., 32

Feuerbach, L., 189

Fichte, J.G., 2, 7, 10–11, 14, 15, 18, 25,
170, 294

Ficino, M., 80, 182

Filippini, F., 2

Finelli, R., 192, 235

Fischer, G., 42, 73, 79, 80, 84

Flavius Josephus, 223

Flore, E., 31–33

Franck, S., 50

Franckenberg, A. von, 1–8, 13, 15, 23, 28, 41,
79, 185

Friesen, H. von, 16

Fuhrmans, H., 53–55, 196

Fullenwider, H.F., 74

G

Gabriel, M., 174

Gadamer, H.G., 257

Gall, F.J., 135

Garniron, P., xx, 176, 185, 199, 249, 260, 261,
286

Gauld, A., 30

Gerabek, W.E., 135

Gerson, J. *See* Charlier de Gerson, J.

Ghert, P.G. van, 7, 35, 56, 58–67, 69, 71, 72,
81, 85, 148, 155, 201, 203, 205, 207,
222, 228, 238, 252, 254

Gichtel, J.G., 10, 12

Gilly, C., 3

Goethe, J.W. von, 8, 32

Görres, J., 42, 53, 55, 135, 145

Gostick, J., 39

Griesheim, K.G.J. von, 80, 81, 283

Griffero, T., 51, 77

Großmann, S., 51

Grotsch, K., 234

Gründer, K., 183

Grüning, T., 134, 142

Gundlach, H., 52, 53

H

Haage, B.D., 135

Haas, A.M., 91

Haering, T.L., xix, 82, 214

Haldane, E.S., xvii, 198, 246

Halfwassen, J., 78, 80, 81, 180, 219, 277

Hamacher, W., 98, 108

Hamann, J.G., 8, 149, 150

Hamberger, J., 7, 42, 50, 150

Hammoud, S., 30, 52
 Hardenberg, G.P.F. von. *See* Novalis
 Harris, H.S., 65, 100, 118, 246, 259, 262
 Heckmann, H., 129, 131
 Heer, F., 75
 Hegel, C., 69
 Hegel, G.W.F.
 Differenz-Schrift, 140
 Encyclopedia, 25, 29, 62, 66–68, 71, 72,
 133, 138, 151–153, 155, 156, 158, 159,
 168, 171, 182, 186, 191, 201, 205, 207,
 220, 225, 226, 228–237, 239–244, 248,
 261, 262, 268, 269, 273, 276
 Fragments on Popular Religion and
 Christianity, 88–97
 History of Philosophy, xx, 64, 65, 88,
 112–116, 128, 137, 140, 141, 143, 144,
 161, 164, 172, 175–180, 183, 184, 185,
 186, 188, 189, 191, 192, 198, 201, 202,
 210, 212, 213, 216, 218, 219, 220, 224,
 225, 226, 242, 244–245, 247, 249,
 251–254, 256, 258, 259, 266, 269,
 273, 277, 281, 282, 283, 285, 286–287,
 289, 291
 Jena Wastebook, xx, 59, 134, 135, 138,
 145, 209, 213, 229, 246
 Phenomenology, xix, 40, 42, 74, 85, 87,
 94, 97, 98, 112, 133–148, 149,
 151–153, 156, 157, 159–161, 164, 165,
 166, 168, 174, 184, 192, 194, 198, 202,
 207, 218, 246, 249
 Philosophy of Religion, 71, 76, 80–81, 84,
 95, 96, 97, 101, 116, 118, 119, 121,
 122, 157, 165, 201, 220, 266–282,
 285–287
 Science of Logic, 142, 201, 220, 221, 228,
 237–238, 239, 241–242, 244
 The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate, 80,
 96–119, 121, 122, 123–132, 133, 159,
 170, 171, 172, 173, 203, 251
 Hellerich, S.V., 20, 28
 Belmont, J.B. van, 29, 50
 Hemsterhuis, F., 80
 Henrich, D., 235, 243
 Herbart, J.F., 184
 Herder, J.G. von, 8, 80, 127
 Heussgen, J. (Oecolampadius), 118
 Hirsch, W., 247
 Hodgson, P.C., 167, 279
 Höffe, O., 54
 Hoffmann, E.T.A., 1
 Hoffmann, F., 47, 54
 Hoffmann-Krayer, E., 5
 Hoffmeister, J., xx, 214
 Höhle, T., 1

Hölderlin, J.C.F., 75, 78, 80, 82, 83, 142, 143,
 235, 243
 Holz, H.H., 54, 166, 168
 Hotho, H.G., xi, xx, 81, 185, 189, 226, 245,
 250, 252, 256–261, 263, 273, 274, 282,
 284–286, 289, 293–302
 Hufeland, C.W., 30, 32, 35–39
 Hufeland, F., 39, 46, 62
 Humboldt, W. von, 204, 206, 207, 209, 234,
 242
 Hyppolite, J., 137

I

Iber, C., 54
 Inwood, M., 124, 140, 166, 167, 181

J

Jacobi, F.H., 75, 76, 80, 82–83, 137–139, 146,
 151, 152, 194, 213
 Jaeschke, W., xvii, xviii, xx, 71, 80, 81, 88, 91,
 145, 176, 185, 202, 249, 260, 261, 266,
 267, 271, 280, 286
 Jäger, J.W., 77
 Jamme, C., 57, 78, 81, 82, 107
 Jantzen, J., 139
 Jesus Christ, 79, 98–100, 102, 104–105, 107,
 123–125, 127–131
 John (author of the Apocalypse), 272
 John (Evangelist), 125, 261
 John the Baptist, 102–103, 171
 Jonas, H., 271
 Jonkers, P., 83
 Judas (Apostle), 165
 Jung, M.H., 50
 Jung-Stilling, H., 18

K

Kant, I., 45, 47, 51, 168, 182–183, 294
 Karlstadt, A. *See* Bodenstein von Karlstadt,
 A.R.
 Keil, G., 135
 Kelly, H.A., 267, 272
 Kemp, F., 49, 129, 131
 Kepler, J., 24
 Kerner, J., 53
 Kierkegaard, S.A., 19
 Kieser, D.G., 30, 39–41, 47, 48
 Kircher, A., 31, 32
 Kirchhoff, J., 54
 Kleist, B.H.W. von, 145, 147
 Kleuker, J.F., 49
 Klingemann, A., 1, 2, 4, 5, 7–9

Klopstock, F.G., 8, 27
 Kluge, C.A.F., 31–34, 37, 40, 61
 Kluge, F., 162, 166
 Koslowski, P., 56, 184
 Kotzebue, A. von, 2
 Koyré, A., 3, 4, 44, 150, 195, 196, 212, 228,
 230, 231, 271, 277
 Krings, H., 135
 Kroner, R., 88, 97–98, 118
 Küng, H., 76, 81, 82, 92
 Kurz, G., 235

L

Lacorte, C., 76, 83
 Lalande, J.-J. de, 183
 Lamb, D.R., xx, 98
 Lange, V., 128, 129
 Lasson, G., 280
 Lavater, J.C., 49
 Lessing, G.E., 78
 Leube, M., 77, 91
 Locke, J., 294
 Lüer, E., 3, 9, 11, 13, 16, 27
 Luther, M., 11, 23–24, 51, 79, 90, 103–104,
 110, 112–122, 128, 129, 256–257

M

Magee, G.A., xvii, xviii, 65, 69, 233
 Maistre, J.-M. de, 44
 Malfatti, G., 28
 Mark (Evangelist), 127
 Marquet, J.-F., 54
 Massolo, A., 94, 95, 108, 124, 139, 239
 Matthew (Evangelist), 165
 Mayer, P., 3, 9–13, 16–18, 20, 29, 30
 Meisner, F., 38. *See also* Mesmer, F.A.
 Meister Eckhart. *See* Eckhart (Meister)
 Melica, C., 107
 Mendelssohn, M., 75, 76, 83
 Menegoni, F., 163, 173, 287
 Menze, C., 88, 90
 Merker, N., 257
 Mesmer, F.A., 30–41, 43–48, 56–57, 60–62,
 65–73, 84, 135, 221, 222
 Metzke, E., 83
 Mewald, E., 30, 48
 Michel, H., 2
 Michelet, C.L., 120, 161, 177, 180, 189, 191,
 192, 225, 244, 254, 259, 260, 283, 289
 Mille, I., 10
 Milton, J., 22, 27, 272
 Minder, R., 50

Mirri, E., 92, 95, 108
 Moiso, F., 135, 197
 Moneti Codignola, M., 204
 Morfino, V., 155
 Mosheim, J.L. von, 4, 78–79, 80, 83–84, 95
 Motte Fouqué, F.H.K. de la, 3
 Müller, G., 33, 34
 Müller-Bergen, A.-L., 76
 Muratori, C., 4, 6, 7, 97, 111, 203, 235,
 261, 283

N

Nancy, J.-L., 265, 276
 Nasse, F., 30
 Neubauer, J., 20
 Newton, I., 47, 50, 250
 Nicolin, F., 78, 82
 Niel, H., 82
 Niethammer, F.I., 58
 Nohl, H., 78, 88, 89, 107
 Nordhoff, A.W., 30, 31, 59, 60
 Novalis (G.P.F. von Hardenberg), 8–10, 12, 13,
 16, 17, 19–21, 53, 142, 146–147, 210

O

Oberti, E., 81
 Oecolampadius. *See* Heussgen, J.
 Oetinger, F.C., 30, 49–57, 73–77, 84
 Ohashi, R., 196, 197
 Oken, L., 135, 224

P

Paracelsus, T., 32–33, 35, 42–56, 84, 221–228,
 248, 255
 Passavant, J.K., 41
 Pastenaci, C., 81
 Paulin, R., 9, 12, 17, 18
 Petrini, F., 74
 Petry, M.J., 57, 62, 66, 67, 73
 Pieper, A., 54
 Piepmeier, R., 51, 52
 Pikulik, L., 9, 10, 12
 Pinkard, T., xvii, 124, 219
 Plato, 26, 72, 73, 80, 149, 150, 159–160, 180,
 182, 183, 186–187, 192–194, 247–248,
 251, 277
 Plitt, G.L., 10, 17, 27, 55
 Plotinus, 80, 160, 174–175, 179–184, 186,
 187, 194, 248–249
 Pöggeler, O., 15, 18, 83, 98, 138, 246
 Pregizer, C.G., 76

Procesi Xella, L., 7, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 276
 Proclus, 160, 172–174, 176, 218
 Prospero. *See* Shakespeare

R

Reicke, B., 163
 Richter, K., 30
 Ripanti, G., 206, 256
 Ritter, J., 166, 183
 Ritter, J.W., 12, 29, 30
 Rixner, T.A., 43, 46, 177, 178
 Robinson, H.C., 12, 196
 Rosenkranz, K., 65, 73, 78, 102, 135, 156,
 157, 197, 202, 209, 210,
 214–216, 218
 Rost, L., 163
 Rózsa, E., 96

S

Sachs, H., 4, 23–25, 28
 Sailer, J.M., 49, 52
 Saint-Martin, L.-C. de, 7, 30, 42–44, 48–49,
 51–52, 55–56, 84, 150, 185
 Saltzmann, F.-R., 73
 Sánchez de Murillo, J., 18, 42, 246
 Sandberger, J., 75–77, 91, 92
 Santi, R., 180
 Sarlemijn, A., 172
 Sartorius, C.F., 77, 81, 91
 Savigny, F.K. von, 49
 Schäublin, P., 235
 Scheffler, J. *See* Silesius, A.
 Schelling, F.W.J., xix, 1–2, 7, 9–12, 14–15, 17,
 18, 29, 35, 40–41, 49, 52–57, 69, 71,
 73, 75, 76–78, 80, 82–85, 102, 133,
 135, 139–140, 142–145, 147, 152, 154,
 156–157, 159, 163, 170, 176, 192–199,
 214, 222, 223, 224, 283, 294
 Schelling, K.E., 59–60, 69
 Schick, F., 235
 Schiebler, K.W., 233
 Schiller, F., 8, 80
 Schlegel, A.W., 8–12, 16, 18–19, 30,
 84, 289
 Schlegel, C., 1
 Schlegel, F., 1–2, 8–14, 16–18, 19–29, 30–31,
 71, 84, 137, 140, 144, 149
 Schleiermacher, F., 247
 Schmid, H., 39, 146
 Schmidt, T.M., 88, 94
 Schneider, R., 57, 73–77
 Schoeller, D., 78

Scholem, G., 279
 Schopenhauer, A., 31, 43–45, 196
 Schubert, G.H. von, 42, 49, 51–55
 Schüler, G., 78, 82
 Schulte-Sasse, J., 235
 Schultz, F., 2
 Schultz, W., 54
 Schulz, G., 1
 Schübler, I., 220, 259
 Schwenck, J.K., 162
 Sebond, R., 176
 Seuse, H., 73, 166
 Shaftesbury (A.A. Cooper, third Earl
 of Shaftesbury), 80
 Shakespeare, W., 22, 23, 289
 Sichirollo, L., 284
 Silesius, A. (J. Scheffler), 44
 Sillig, J.F., 3
 Simhon, A., 137
 Solger, K.W.F., 11, 14–16, 19,
 145–149, 157
 Sørensen, B.A., 9
 Speight, A., 116
 Spener, P.J., 75
 Spinoza, B., 76, 80, 83, 282, 294
 Stahl, G.E., 29
 Steffens, H., 223
 Stieglitz, J., 32, 36, 38
 Stieve, F., 63
 Stoeffler, E., 51
 Storr, G.C., 75, 79
 Storti, C., 69
 Stransky, O. von, 50, 51
 Strauß, G., 169
 Sturma, D., 197
 Swedenborg, E., 30, 43, 51, 53

T

Tassi, A., 78–80, 91, 92, 94
 Tauler, J., 12, 39, 74, 78–81, 150
 Taylor, C., 257
 Telle, J., 6
 Tennemann, W.G., 177–188, 190, 191, 247
 Tertullian, 223
 Tholuck, F.A.G., 153–154
 Thom, M., 189
 Thomas Aquinas, 166
 Tieck, L., 2, 9–21, 25–27, 144–150,
 170, 210
 Tiedemann, D., 187
 Tilken, B., 201
 Tilliette, X., 83, 84, 143
 Troxler, I.P.V., 192

U

Unzer, J.C., 34

V

Verra, V., 95

Vieillard-Baron, J.-L., 77

Vieweg, K., xi, 19, 80, 134, 142,
182, 187, 244

Vigus, J., 12, 26, 247

von Sommerfeld, A., 6

Voss, J.H., 257

W

Wagner, J.J., 145

Wahl, J., 82, 84, 246

Wallmann, J., 50, 51

Walsh, D., xvii, xviii, 9, 73

Weckwerth, C., 189

Wegner, W., 135

Weigand, F.L.K., 163

Weigel, V., 50

Weigelt, H., 138

Wetzel, K.F.G., 2

Wieland, C.M., 80

Wienholt, D.A., 33, 38, 49, 60

Windischmann, K.J.H., 135

Wolfart, K.C., 36–39

Wollgast, S., 10, 50, 77

Z

Zinzendorf, N.L. von, 51

Zoroaster, 164, 166, 279

Zwingli, H., 118

Subject Index

A

Abendmahl. See Last supper
Aberglaube. See Superstition
Abfall. See Fall
Abgrund. See Abyss
 Absolute, xix, 22, 63–64, 83, 98, 133–134, 136–141, 143, 146, 151, 180, 192–199, 207, 218, 283, 282–285, 293, 295, 297, 299
Abstraktum, 263, 265, 270, 283–284
 Abyss (*Abgrund*), 195, 198, 213, 278.
 See also Grund; Ungrund; Urgrund
 Activity (*Tätigkeit*), 127, 165, 167, 208, 233–234, 236, 242, 278, 279
 Action. *See also* Activity
 as *Handlung*, 97–99, 100–102, 105
 as *Tat*, 100, 279
 Adam, 44, 45, 208, 230, 236, 267–274, 276
 Adam Kadmon, 279–280
 Adamic language. *See Natursprache*
 Adoration, 98, 113–114, 185
Ahnden. *See* Premonition
 Alchemy, xvii, 46, 47, 50, 51, 54, 153, 185, 223–228, 246, 248, 290, 291, 297
 Alienation (*Entfremdung*), 89–90, 93–94, 96, 122, 133, 141, 158, 169
 Alterity, 210–211, 219, 229–231, 238, 274–275, 276, 278, 280, 284
 Anabaptists, 128
 Angel, 230–231, 249, 251, 253, 264, 271–272, 276, 283
 Anger
 as *Grimm/Grimmigkei*t, 210–212, 235
 as *Zorn* (God's wrath), 210, 226, 229, 230, 235, 282, 284, 300–301

Anschaung. *See* Intuition
Äußerlichkeit. *See* Exteriority

B

Baptism, 102, 103
 Barbarity (*Barbarei*), 212–213, 215–216, 224–225, 227, 228, 244–256, 258, 259, 266, 286, 287–290
Begeisterung. *See* Inspiration
Begierde. *See* Desire
Begriff. *See* Concept
Bestimmtheit. *See* Determination
Bewußtsein. *See* Conscience
 Bible, 257, 273
 Genesis, 267, 269–271, 278, 286
 Luther's translation of the Bible, 24, 118, 257
Böse. *See* Evil

C

Cabala, 50, 158, 185, 251, 279, 280
 Catholicism, 97, 103–104, 110–115, 118, 122, 176
Clairvoyance, 37–40, 47–48, 57, 60, 69–71
 Cobbler, xviii–xix, xxi, 1–5, 8–10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 27, 28–29, 41–42, 45, 51, 58, 66, 179, 188–191, 218, 219, 297–298
 Cognition (*Erkenntnis*), 13, 14, 68, 70, 71, 136, 137, 140, 143, 149, 153, 168, 172, 178, 187, 189, 192, 193, 212, 217, 263, 264, 268, 269, 271–274, 292–295, 297, 302

Concept (*Begriff*), xix, 41, 59, 60, 63–64, 68, 69, 71, 80, 123, 134, 136–141, 142, 146, 151, 154, 155, 156–164, 174–178, 180, 181, 183, 184, 192, 213, 226, 232, 233, 235–236, 242–244, 245–246, 248–252, 253, 258–260, 266, 270, 278, 283, 290–291, 296–297

Conscience (*Bewußtsein*), 90, 102, 115–117, 119–121, 124, 127, 130, 164–165, 181, 189, 205, 228, 237, 269–270, 272–273, 278, 284, 286, 294. *See also* Self-consciousness

Creation (*Schöpfung*), 155, 195, 242, 250, 260, 262, 276, 277, 280, 285, 286

Cult, 113, 114, 164, 165

D

Desire

as *Begierde*, 44

as *Lust*, 18, 19, 134, 262, 264

as *Sehnen*, 102

as *Verlangen*, 102, 129, 149

Determination (*Bestimmtheit, Bestimmung*), 63, 68, 102, 136, 207, 226, 238, 239, 242–243, 251, 268, 273, 275, 276, 278, 279

Devil, 92, 93, 95, 129, 211, 212, 214, 230, 231, 270–273, 276, 277, 284–285, 299–301. *See also* Lucifer; Satan

Dialectics, xx, 26, 46, 108, 155, 159, 160, 192–195, 216–219, 263, 265–266, 274–281, 283, 284, 286

Difference (*Differenz*), 175. *See also* Indifference

Divine triangle, 209, 210, 214–219, 221, 234, 238

Doubt, 18–20

E

Ecstasy (*Ekstase*), 38, 48, 55, 57, 133–136, 143, 147, 159–161, 168–170, 174, 175, 179, 181–184, 192–194, 209. *See also* Clairvoyance

Ecstatic rapture (*Entzückung*), 38, 192–193

Egoity (*Ichheit, Ichts*), 233, 236, 260, 262, 284

Ekstase. See Ecstasy

Elevation (*Erhabenheit, Erhebung*), 16, 134, 136, 147, 152, 179, 182–183, 204, 206, 283

Empiricism, 189–190

Emptiness (*Leere, Leerheit*), 76, 135, 144, 149, 157, 192, 195, 206, 207, 208

Enlightenment, 9, 98, 116–119, 153, 185–186

Enthusiasm. *See also* Begeisterung

as *Enthusiasmus*, 25, 72, 182

as *Schwärmerei* (excessive enthusiasm), 9, 11, 25, 26–28, 36–37, 122, 123–132, 134, 141, 159, 160, 172, 174, 178, 179–184, 251–252, 281

Enthusiast (*Schwärmer*), 10–11, 25–28, 50, 122, 127–132, 138, 150, 160, 172, 180–181, 183–187, 190, 191, 222, 248, 251, 297

Entzückung. See Ecstatic Rapture

Entzweiung. See Separation

Erhabenheit. See Elevation

Erkenntnis. See Cognition

Esotericism, xvii, xxi, 136

Eucharist, 95, 97, 103, 104, 106–107, 109–110, 112, 114–117, 123, 132

Evil

as *Böse*, 195, 211, 217, 229, 232, 235, 264–265, 268–270, 272–274, 284–292, 301

origin of e., 218, 219, 229, 231–237, 265, 266, 274, 284, 286, 287

as *Übel*, 232, 234, 236, 273

Exteriority (*Äußerlichkeit*), 105, 107, 113–115, 117, 119, 121, 130, 177, 188–189, 229, 231

external philosophizing (*äußerliches Philosophieren*), 188, 254, 297

F

Faith (*Glauben*), 40, 44, 48, 72, 78, 83, 90, 92, 94–96, 112–117, 123, 127–129, 137–139, 141, 142, 146, 148, 151, 167, 178, 182, 213

Fall (*Abfall*), 44, 218, 229, 230, 236, 269–274, 276, 284, 294, 300

Fanaticism, 128, 129, 131–132, 182

Fantasy (*Phantasie*), 13, 16, 20, 26–27, 41, 60, 88–89, 92, 109, 169, 174, 180, 187, 203–204, 296, 297

Feeling (*Gefühl*), 27, 33, 40, 67–68, 70, 76, 82, 89, 96, 98, 99, 101–103, 105–108, 113, 134, 135, 137, 138, 140, 146, 149–151, 170, 171, 177–179, 191, 203, 204, 231, 269–270

Force (*Kraft-Kräfte*), 5, 14, 24, 40, 43, 47, 69, 82, 93, 100, 107, 190, 205, 209, 219, 226, 248–251, 255, 256, 260–261, 296, 299, 300–302

Freedom (*Freiheit*), 28, 78, 88, 116, 119, 129, 134, 157, 158, 233, 234, 236, 237, 257, 270, 287, 293–294

Friendship (*Freundschaft*), 58, 59, 98–101, 103, 107, 110–111, 114, 146
Frühromantik. *See* Romanticism

G

Gefühl. *See* Feeling
Gegensätze. *See* Opposites
Geist. *See* Spirit
Gemüt, 129, 147, 149, 150, 225, 249–250, 252, 255–256, 265, 302
Genie, 22, 144–145. *See also* Romanticism
Gewalt. *See* Violence
Glauben. *See* Faith
Gnosis, 152–157
Gottheit, 217, 231. *See also* Abyss
 difference between *Gott* and *Gottheit*, 195
Grimm. *See* Anger
Grund, 197, 213, 231, 235, 247, 302. *See also*
 Ungrund; *Urgrund*

H

Hellsehen. *See* Clairvoyance
 Heresy, 7
 Heretics, 50, 277–279
 Host, 112–117
 Hylozoism, 47
 Hysteria, 33, 69

I

Idea, 15, 62, 93, 118, 120–121, 125, 140, 143, 147, 153, 154, 168, 173, 175, 187, 189, 194, 203, 216, 229–232, 235, 244–245, 247–253, 255, 278, 275, 278–279, 285, 289–290, 294, 295, 298
Identitätsphilosophie. *See* Identity, philosophy of
 Identity, 143, 169–171, 194–195, 207, 243, 263, 265–266, 272, 285
 philosophy of i., 135, 139, 152, 192, 194–195, 197–199
 Imagination, *Einbildungskraft*, 8, 25, 27, 38, 44–46, 49, 59, 64, 70, 89–90, 92, 94–95, 98–109, 117, 137, 148, 174, 180–181, 187, 203–205, 212, 248. *See also* Fantasy; Magnetism
 Immediacy (*Unmittelbarkeit*), 70–71, 83, 133–137, 139–143, 146, 151, 152, 156, 164–165, 168, 170, 174, 175, 184, 193, 194, 207, 208, 232–233, 235, 239, 272, 296
 Indifference (*Indifferenz*), 11, 46, 143, 144, 175, 194–197, 199, 222, 232, 235

Infäßlichkeit, 263–265

Inspiration (*Begeisterung*), 10–11, 18–19, 126–127, 133–136, 138, 141–145, 147, 149–150, 174, 178, 182
 poetic i. (*poetische B.*), 143–145

Intellect (*Verstand*), 26, 27, 41, 67, 90–91, 105, 116, 140, 146, 149, 150, 167, 169–172, 177–179, 181, 182, 185, 260, 282, 287, 294

Intuition (*Anschauung*), 37, 48, 63–64, 71, 83, 139–140, 178, 180, 193–194, 211–213, 217, 246, 253

intellectual i. (*intellektuelle A.*), 142–143, 192, 194, 243

Irony, 4, 19–20, 93, 138, 149

Irrationality, xix, 35, 53, 72, 97, 108, 150, 151, 157–158, 168, 174, 191

J

Jena circle, 7–31, 84. *See also* Romanticism
 Judaism, 124–127, 129–132

Judgment (*Urteil*), 222, 235–237, 241–244, 253, 258, 261, 266, 269, 274, 275, 277, 281. *See also* Separation
 (*Ur-Teilung*)
 final judgment (*Endurteil*), 235

K

Kraft. *See* Force

L

Last Supper, 96–101, 103, 105–108, 110–116, 119, 133, 170

Leerheit. *See* Emptiness

Liebe. *See* Love

Lilienzeit, 51

Love (*Liebe*), 13–16, 18, 21, 50, 60, 75, 96–99, 101, 103–109, 111, 114, 123–127, 130, 134, 135, 144, 226, 229, 230, 235, 275–276, 280, 282, 301, 302

Lucifer, 44, 210–212, 218, 228–232, 234–236, 239, 240, 242, 255, 260, 262–264, 266, 267, 269–281, 283, 284, 286, 287, 300.
See also Devil; Satan

M

Macht. *See* Force; Power

Magic, 33, 35, 38–40, 43–46, 48, 66, 71, 185, 222, 248, 289

Magnetism. *See also Clairvoyance*; Magic;
 Medicine; Sympathy
 animal magnetism, xix, 28–63, 65–73, 81,
 84, 135–136, 172, 221
 magnet, 28–29, 31–34, 37, 45
 magnetic sleep, 29, 37–40, 66–67
 magnetizer, 31–33, 36–38, 43, 46, 61–62
Mauerkirche, 50
 Mediation (*Vermittlung*), 12, 16, 69–71,
 133–134, 137, 146, 152, 168, 193, 272
 Medicine, 30, 31, 32–33, 43, 91, 135
Menschwerdung, 79
 Movement (*Bewegung*), xix, 80, 99, 105–109,
 112, 114, 115, 117, 118, 121–122, 123,
 126, 128, 155, 158, 166–177, 181–184,
 192–194, 199, 202, 204, 206, 208,
 216–219, 222, 223, 233, 236–242, 244,
 251–253, 262, 264–266, 270, 272, 273,
 275, 276, 278, 280–282, 284, 286–287,
 290, 301
 Music, 2–3, 5
 Mysteries, 100, 120–121,
 161–163, 166. *See also Mysterium*;
 Secret
Mysterium, 157, 158, 161–167, 170, 175, 266,
 287–288
Mysterium magnum, 260–262
 Mysticism. *See also Philosophia teutonica*
 contemporary m., 152, 170
 as esotericism, 136
 German m., 43, 73
 and movement, 173, 192
 (*see also Movement*)
 mystical action, 97, 99–106, 110–112, 121,
 123, 170–171 (*see also Action*)
 mystical object, 97, 103–115, 117, 119,
 121–123, 130, 170
 as mystification, 133–159
 as *Mystik*, 19, 73, 88–89, 92, 96–97, 118,
 133, 145–147, 149–150, 177–179, 183
 oriental m., 202–209
 as philosophy, 176–177
 and scholasticism, 172, 176–177, 178
 as speculation, 159–191
 and symbolism, 97
 Myth, 101, 151–153, 156–159, 169, 187,
 212–213, 230, 246–247, 250, 252
 Platonic myths, 160, 247–248

N

Naturphilosophie, 22, 28–31, 35, 42, 44, 47,
 49–50, 52–53, 55, 57, 58, 60, 66,
 134–135, 139, 145, 185, 190, 210, 224,
 229, 230

Naturreligion. *See Religion*; Natural
Natursprache, 45, 208, 234, 236, 239, 253
 and definition of *Qualität*, 208 (*see also*
 Quality)
 and meaning of *Teufel*, 236 (*see also*
 Devil)
 and meaning of *Ur-Teil*, 235 (*see also*
 Judgment; Separation)
 Negativity, xx, 208, 209, 216, 218, 228–234,
 236–239, 241, 242, 260, 266, 269, 273,
 281, 290, 299–300
 Neoplatonism, xix, 79–80, 132, 160–163, 168,
 172–176, 179–183, 186–187, 192–194,
 199, 219–222, 277–282
Nichts (Nothing)
 opposite of *Ichts*, 260, 262 (*see also*
 Egoity; Subjectivity)

O

Opposites (*Gegensätze*), 20, 125, 127, 150,
 159, 171, 173, 189, 193–195, 197, 231,
 238, 245, 255, 263, 265, 276, 279,
 282–286, 293–294, 298–299
 Orientalism, 204–207, 209

P

Philosophia teutonica, 191.
See also Mysticism
 Pietism, xvii, xix, 42, 49–50, 52, 54, 56, 57,
 73–77, 82, 84, 138, 153, 185, 221
Poesie, 13–14, 16–18, 20–27, 137, 143–145
 Power (*Macht*), 118, 134, 155, 242, 248, 249,
 255, 293
 Premonition (*Ahnden*), 40, 142
 Profundity (*Tiefe*), xvii, 4, 7, 15, 22, 27,
 63–65, 69, 80, 120, 136, 137, 140, 144,
 151, 153, 157, 159, 177, 186, 188, 191,
 205, 207–208, 213, 220, 225–227, 238,
 240, 241, 243, 245, 246, 251–256, 268,
 278, 283–284, 297–298, 301–302
 Prophecy, 69–70, 72, 126, 133, 135–139,
 141–142, 147
 Prophet, 8–9, 16, 28, 41, 48, 51,
 127–128, 220

Q

Qual, 92, 195, 208, 233–234, 236–240, 242,
 252, 253, 262, 264, 272, 273, 274, 282,
 284, 297–299, 302. *See also*
Natursprache; Quality
Qualierung (Qualification), 208–209,
 237–240, 242

Quality, 208–209, 237–242, 244, 249, 251,
253–254, 258, 262, 264, 272–273, 283,
284, 299, 301

R

Reason (*Vernunft*), 40, 69, 71, 125, 137, 146,
149, 150, 154, 167–168, 171, 178, 180,
187, 235

Reconciliation (*Versöhnung*), 96, 124, 126,
130, 183, 271–275, 277, 286, 293–294

Reflection (*Reflexion*), 63, 136, 140, 167, 168,
194

Reformation, 11, 117, 118, 128–129, 191, 227,
256, 257

Religion

artistic r., 164

natural r. (*Naturreligion*), 71

popular r. (*Volksreligion*), 88–97, 101

Representation (*Vorstellung*), 63–65, 70–72,

92, 119, 115–117, 121, 146, 167,

174–176, 181, 183, 204–206, 231, 248,

269, 271, 273, 278, 287, 290, 297–298,

301–302

Revelation (*Offenbarung*), 39, 56, 68, 72, 139,
142–143, 158, 165–166, 260, 262, 281,
285, 300

Ritual, 98–101, 103–108, 110–122, 171.

See also Cult

Romanticism, xix, 1–2, 5, 7–26, 29–31,
40–42, 45, 47, 53, 55, 59, 66, 74,
108, 133, 144–153, 156–157, 159–160,
170, 172, 192, 195, 202, 210–211,
214–215, 218, 221–222, 283.

See also Jena circle

S

Satan, 267, 272. *See also* Lucifer

Schiedlichkeit, 260, 262–265

Schöpfung. *See* Creation

Schwärmerei. *See* Enthusiasm; Fanaticism

Schwärmer. *See* Enthusiast

Schwefel. *See* Sulphur

Secret (*Geheimnis*), 25, 40, 90, 157–158,
162–165, 169–170. *See also* *Mysterium*

Self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*),
140–141, 165, 256, 260, 262–263, 265,
267, 286

Separation, 108, 124–125, 130–131, 166–167,
169–170, 199, 211–212, 214, 217–218,
230, 235–236, 242–244, 250, 253,
261–262, 265–266, 269–271, 274–281,

285–286. *See also* *Schiedlichkeit*;
Separator

as *Entzweiung*, 270, 273, 275

as *Sonderung* and *Besonderheit*,
116–117, 243

as *Trennung*, 68, 125, 169, 217, 243, 269,
271, 273–275, 294

as *Ur-Teilung* (*see also* *Urteil*),
235–236, 242–243, 263, 276–277,
280, 284

Separator, 260–263, 266, 270, 283–284,
286, 300

Serpent, 267–273, 282–283. *See also* Bible;
Satan; Temptation

Signatura rerum, 225

Sin (original), 267, 272–273

Somnambulism, 37, 39, 48, 62, 67–68, 71.

See also Magnetism

Speculation

etymology of *speculatio*, 166

and mysticism, 73, 104, 118–122, 150,
159–191

and reason (*Vernunft*), 169

Spirit (*Geist*), 7, 13, 18, 22, 24, 25, 26, 44, 60,
66, 68–71, 73, 88, 93, 96, 99, 101–102,
105–106, 113–118, 120, 127, 136–138,
141–142, 147, 150, 152–158, 165–167,
174, 179, 182–183, 186, 187, 188–191,
211, 216, 223, 225, 228, 231, 233, 235,
236–237, 250–252, 254–257, 260–262,
265, 268–269, 272–273, 275, 289–290,
293, 297–302

Stift (*Tübinger Stift*), 49, 57, 73–75, 77, 78, 80,
82, 83, 91, 110

Subjectivity (*Subjektivität*), 67, 98, 105,
107, 109, 114, 117, 119, 121,
165–166, 168–169, 188, 234,
236, 237, 262

Substance (*Substanz*), 134, 160, 165,
173–175, 219, 221, 248, 249–250,
258, 282, 286

Sulphur, 47, 154–155, 223–224, 227, 302

Superstition (*Aberglaube*), 47, 169, 170, 172

Symbol, 8, 111, 130, 227, 298

Symbolism, 21, 95, 97, 101–103, 108, 111,
116, 171, 217, 278

Sympathy (*Sympathie*), 33, 38, 46, 62, 93

T

Tätigkeit. *See* Activity

Temptation (*Verführung*), 267–269, 272

Teufel. *See* Devil

Theosophy, 10, 26–29, 42–46, 48–49, 51–57,
63–65, 84, 134, 153, 185, 186, 191,
203, 213, 220, 221, 224–225, 256, 298
Torment (*Pein*), 208, 233, 236, 237, 299.
See also Qual
Triad (*Dreiheit*), 173, 175–176, 281, 299, 302
Trinity (*Dreieinigkeit*), 80, 155, 166, 168, 173,
176, 199, 218, 266–288, 302

U

Übel. *See* Evil
Ungrund, 195–199, 213, 222, 235, 261, 291
Unification (*Vereinigung*), 62, 96, 98–99, 105,
107, 115, 123, 125, 130, 132, 149, 150,
167, 189, 255, 270, 275, 282, 285, 294,
297, 299
Unio mystica, 77, 81, 90–97, 141
Unmittelbarkeit. *See* Immediacy
Urgrund, 198
Urstand, 258, 264, 286
Urteil. *See* Judgment
Ur-Teilung. *See* Judgment; Separation

V

Vereinigung. *See* Unification
Verführung. *See* Temptation
Vermittlung. *See* Mediation
Versöhnung. *See* Reconciliation
Violence (*Gewalt*, *Gewaltsamkeit*), 63–64, 89,
92, 154–156, 205, 226–228, 249, 253,
256, 290, 296, 299
Volksreligion (Popular Religion).
See Religion
Vorstellung. *See* Representation

W

Widerwärtigkeit (Contrariety), 286
Will (*Wille*), 33, 44, 195, 235, 260–265,
269–270, 300–301
Witz, 20
Wunder, 3, 5, 14–15, 25, 90, 147, 148, 150

Z

Zorn. *See* Anger